

R & R COMMUNICATION: RESPONDING VS. REACTING

To **REACT** to a situation is very common—perhaps even quite normal! Learning how to **RESPOND** rather than **REACT** will take some practice. Immediate reactions to a situation or crisis are usually **EMOTIONAL** and **NOT OBJECTIVE** in the least. Most **REACTORS** have not considered the facts objectively, have probably not even heard or seen all the factual issues concerning the situation, and lack good decision making. In a heated debate or argument, most **REACTORS** are not listening to the other side, but get defensive as they think about what they will say as a counter argument.

To **RESPOND** to situations, you will need to:

1. ***Delay any kind of reaction***—As a Responder, you will practice “taking the situation under advisement” and DELAY making any kind of decision until you have had time to think about it, consider why the situation is so important, evaluate all the possible options, and “calmed down” so that you can respond objectively rather than emotionally.
2. ***Set a later time to discuss*** the issue or conflict after you and the opposing side have had some time to think about the importance of the issue, possible solutions, and when you have enough time to discuss the problem thoroughly. When calm and more objective, discussions take far less time because listening to each other without interruptions and considering things objectively rather than subjectively is more possible. ***Creative solutions to problems or conflicts take some time to think, strategize, and plan.***
3. ***Consider the importance of the issue*** and be **willing to drop** unimportant ones and **compromise** on the important ones. Many arguments and conflicts are over **trivial matters that are not even very important in the bigger picture.**
4. ***Responding*** characterizes excellent communication and is a powerful way to convey your love, care, and support of the other person while **Reacting** is negative, attacking, and hurtful. **Responding** makes the communication a positive experience and one that the participant would be willing to repeat in the future. **Reacting** leaves the participant with negative, unhealthy feelings, and an experience they wish to avoid rather than repeat in the future.

So try RESPONDING rather than REACTING.....you'll find it much more effective in resolving conflicts!