

SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON – RESPOND RATHER THAN REACT

Things have got to change! *We say this a lot. Yes, there are many things that **need** to change but the only thing I can change is myself. So, I'll start with where I usually **react**. I will give a thoughtful **response** instead of a quick reaction. Here's the premise: **As I change my responses toward my loved one, I will also be changing our relationship.***

A. Acknowledge the condition.

This is not easy. I'm choosing to change despite my loved one's condition and behavior. I need to be honest in my responses. If I'm not able to respond in a healthy and honest way, perhaps it's a time to not respond. Walk away...not answer the text message...allow silence. Push pause. Think.

B. Be the a _____.

- I will not react with childish behaviors.
- I will keep my emotions in check, not adding to the drama (fear, anger, sorrow, indifference, etc.).
- I will resist engaging in arguments...I'll respond after thinking, praying, counting, breathing, seeking counsel or advice. No more rushing in with reaction.
- I will avoid manipulating or controlling.
- I will avoid speaking with disrespect, humiliation, patronization, arrogance, or condescension.

C. Choose to s _____ rather than attack.

- Attacks consist of (CRAM):
 - Criticism
 - Ridicule
 - Accusations
 - Mocking

All these behaviors lead to rejection of my words.

- Support consists of (CARE):
 - **C**ompassion
 - **A**cceptance
 - **R**espect
 - **E**ncouragement

As I CARE for someone, it is possible for them to receive gentle conviction.

- **Don't CRAM your demands. Offer CARE.**

D. Differentiate between behavior and person.

- I may not support the behavior; yet I can still express love for my loved one.
- My loved one knows I disapprove of the behavior. I can avoid reacting with a lecture, finger-wagging, rolling my eyes or with sarcasm.
- If a behavior is healthy or positive, my response needs to be healthy or positive:
 - Recognition or acknowledgement
 - "Thank you for your efforts to make changes."
 - "I appreciate it when you honor my boundaries. I've noticed that you are following through."
 - Praise
 - Encouragement
 - "I can see you are trying."
 - "You showed healthy self-control when asked to go to a party and you chose to go to an AA meeting."

Mike says...

"As you practice your new habits, the biggest thing you need to remember is that you are now dealing with another adult, not a child.

Because you have learned to stop giving instant answers to requests from your son or daughter, you can take time to stop and think about how you would treat other adults in this situation, and act accordingly."

*from The Four Seasons of Recovery for
Parents of Alcoholics and Addicts by Mike
Speakman*

Lesson Notes

As I improve the way I r _____,
it might improve the
r _____.

React vs Respond:

Consider the difference.

A response requires t _____ and
th _____.