

Responding vs. Reacting

Dear Parent,

One of the hardest things in the world to do is to respond to your teen as they are throwing an attitude instead of reacting to them. What's the difference? Well, reacting is based on emotion which we all know is rampant when dealing with a teenager. We respond to the situation when we step back from the emotion and take a moment to think through what is really going on. Like I said, it's not easy!

Parents, the secret is out. The map to your "buttons" has been published, and your teen will push them. Repeatedly. But we do our own share of pushing, don't we? You know what makes your teenager crazy and sometimes, just sometimes, it feels really good to give them a good share of their own medicine. At least for a moment, until we realize we have done exactly what we are trying to teach them NOT to do! Two steps forward, one step back! Just keep moving forward.

Please take a moment to watch this video:

<https://vimeo.com/parentministry/review/69754670/788bdfbc13>

Now that you have had a chance to watch the video, let's take one more breath. Reacting is easy, responding isn't. Responding shows your teen that you love them enough to stop for a moment and make sure what you are saying or doing is based on truth and not emotion. Reacting can be a really selfish act. We want to get our point across at all costs. Sometimes the cost is just a little too high. It can cost the trust our teens have in us. It can cost the time it takes to rebuild that trust in our relationship.

This is a biggie and it can be a deal breaker. Can your teen trust that you will respond and not react to any given situation. Because there are lots and lots of situations! Have the courage to ask your teen if you respond or react and then give them permission to tell you how they wish you would handle these situations. It takes a brave and humble parent to realize that before we can teach our teens this concept maybe we should learn it for ourselves!

Pastor David