REACTION VS. RESPONSE

by:

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Most of the time educators fail to solve some issues because they immediately chose to react instead of responding to the situation.

Some people use reaction and response as synonymous but the truth is, they are different.

A reaction is on the spot. It’s usually driven by the beliefs, biases, and prejudices of the unconscious mind. When somebody says or does something without thinking, that’s the unconscious mind running the show. A reaction is based in the moment and doesn’t care for the long term effects of what the somebody does or says. This refers for being survival-oriented and on some level a defense mechanism.

On the other hand, a response usually comes more slowly. It’s information-based from both the conscious mind and unconscious mind. A response is more ecological, meaning to say, it takes into concern on the well-being of not only that somebody but those around him also. It contemplates the long term effects and stays in line with your core values.

For example: A child breaks something.

React: A person can immediately react by getting angry, perhaps yelling, upsetting the child and yourself, worsening your relationship, not making anything better.

Respond: A person may notices his anger reaction, takes a pause, takes a breath, and considers the situation. First response is to see if the child is alright - is he hurt,
scared? Then, recognize that the object is already broken. Let it go, it is lesser important than the value of life of a person. Next, help him clean up, show him that mistakes occur. Lastly, calmly talk about on how to avoid mistakes like that for the future and give him a hug.

Now that it is clearly differentiated the definition between reaction and response, as educators, it is important to learn on how to response. The main thing to practice is to be mindful and the pause.

Mindfulness means observing ourselves when something occurs that might usually upset us or trigger our emotional reaction. Take a close consideration to how our minds react towards things that are happening.

Then take a pause. We don’t need to act abruptly. We should learn to pause, do not act, but take a breathe instead. As we observe this urge arising unreasonably, take time until it go away. Some of the times it takes few seconds to go away; in other times, we should politely take away ourselves from the situation and let ourselves cool down before we respond.

Pause.

Respond.

Now that we are in control, consider the most intelligent, compassionate response might be. Think of what we can do to help conserve and develop relationship, to teach, to build a better team or partnership, to make the situation better, as well as to calm everyone down.

It might no that easy at first. But as time goes by, you’ll learn to observe this on your own, and you’ll master the way you pause. If you mess up, never stop...just continue – remember to be mindful when it happens next time. Be noted of what triggers your reaction, and pay attention when it happens again.
References:

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