

Reducing Conflict 11 Building in Lag Time

by **Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD**



It is usually wise to build in some lag time between a stimulus and your reaction to it. That's because when we have a stimulus, it enters our brain on the right side. We deal with the situation emotionally first, before we have a chance to consider the most appropriate response.

Example

Suppose you pass someone in the hall and he makes an unkind hand gesture and facial expression in your direction. Your immediate emotional reaction would probably be a combination of rage and disgust.

If you allow yourself to be hijacked by your emotions in real time, your reaction might be to tackle the guy and start a fist fight. That might seem like the best thing to do, but there may be better options available.

Build in a pause

If you would just pause a few seconds before reacting, it would allow you to process the signal on the left side of the brain where logic occurs. It takes only a couple seconds for the signal to pass from the right side of the brain to the left side through the Corpus Callosum. The Corpus Callosum is a flat band of millions of fibers that conveys the electrical signals in the brain.

The logic side of the brain deals with the possible reactions and the likely consequences of each action. That analysis allows you to select one that is most consistent with your best outcome.

Emotional Intelligence

The ability to think through consequences before reacting to a stimulus is a big part of Emotional Intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence has four parts, according to Daniel Goleman.

Self Awareness – the ability to experience your own emotions consciously

Self Management – the ability to manage your actions to get the best outcome

Social Awareness – also called Empathy – is the ability to understand the emotions of others

Social Skill – the ability to manage situations to obtain the best result

In our example, the social skill might involve asking the other person what is going on. It might involve doing nothing and circle back later with the individual. It might involve having some discussions with others to see if the person was under some sort of extreme pressure or if there was some external force that was not known by you.

Conclusion

The ability to build in some lag time between a stimulus and your response is good skill to develop. It can save you a lot of grief in life.

Free Video

Here is a 3-minute video that contains more information on one part of Emotional Intelligence.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DChwrf9hXwI>

Bob Whipple, MBA, CPTD, is a consultant, trainer, speaker, and author in the areas of leadership and trust. He is the author of four books: 1. The Trust Factor: Advanced Leadership for Professionals (2003), 2. Understanding E-Body Language: Building Trust Online (2006), 3. Leading with Trust is Like Sailing Downwind (2009), and 4. Trust in Transition: Navigating Organizational Change (2014). In addition, he has authored over 1000 articles and videos on various topics in leadership and trust. Bob has many years as a senior executive with a Fortune 500 Company and with non-profit organizations.

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