

## React Less, Respond More

Have you ever thought about what are your hot buttons? We all have them. Maybe it is what someone says to you, or maybe it is a certain look. Hot buttons usually trigger an instantaneous emotional reaction inside us. If the emotion is unpleasant, how do you react? How effective are you at handling this emotion?

Here's an example. Early in my career a boss of mine told me he had an opportunity for me. I was initially enticed by the idea of a new project, but that quickly changed to disappointment when I found out the details of the project. The next time I was told of an opportunity like that I immediately reacted emotionally. I would frown, sigh loudly, and usually roll my eyes in sarcastic disbelief. You can guess what message this sent my boss.

Every time this reaction is repeated in your life it is strengthened and can become very hard to change. However, it is *much* easier to change the way you respond to your hot buttons than it is to change or avoid the trigger or person. Here are some steps you can take to help change that pattern.

- 1. Identify one of your triggers/"hot" buttons**

What is a hot button you would like to change? Select a situation you will find yourself in the near future where you would like to respond effectively instead of react emotionally or irrationally.

- 2. Assess how you currently react to this trigger**

Close your eyes and watch a movie of the situation. Notice who is there, what they're saying and how they're behaving. Pay close attention to how *you* are behaving, reacting and most importantly *feeling*. Watch it all the way to the end.

- 3. Visualize your response**

Think about how you would like to respond, instead of react, to the situation. Describe what you are doing, saying and *feeling*. Run the movie again in your mind while watching yourself responding effectively instead of reacting. Repeat this movie 3 or 4 more times.

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