
From Reactivity to Dialogue

Thoughts of the Month: December 2008

Couples often confess to us that they really do not practice the Dialogue in their daily lives (in spite of their best intentions!) This is understandable since we know the dialogue is not an instinctive process. While we will always advocate the used of the actual tool of Dialogue, we believe the real shift that takes place is inside each of us as we live in a dialogical manner.

Dialogue is a respectful principle of human relations that honors the "Other" in a conversation or any interaction. Dialogue represents an override of that reptilian response that can grab any of us before we know it. People regularly respond to their partner or to their children with lightning fast negativity that would be mortifying to them upon seeing themselves on tape.

Dialogue, or thoughtful negotiation, is coming back onto the world scene as well. The reactivity and unilateral policies of the last while are giving way to a more dialogical approach to world problems. I believe the most historically relevant aspect of the recent election is not related to skin color. I believe it is a movement toward appreciation that all people are connected and that the way to bridge differences is...well...to bridge differences. How about that!?!

We have had the imagery and tools needed for peace in the world right in our own couples' workshop. I read an article recently where even one of our top terrorist interrogators revealed that understanding and respectful conversation was more valuable than brutal torture in gaining vital information.

Dialogue is the "road less traveled."
Reactivity is the easy, popular response.

Dialogue says, "You are a 'Thou!'"
Reactivity says, "You are an 'it'."

Dialogue is thoughtful and "frontal lobish."
Reactivity is chaotic and "base brainish."

Dialogue is mature.
Reactivity is childish.

Dialogue is healthy (physically, mentally, and emotionally) for both parties.
Reactivity is unhealthy (physically, mentally, and emotionally) for both parties.

Dialogue dissolves problems.
Reactivity exacerbates problems.

Dialogue transforms enemies.
Reactivity creates more enemies.

Dialogue produces bountiful wealth.
Reactivity produces perpetual cost.

Dialogue is a spiritual discipline.
Reactivity becomes an addiction.

Dialogue is a powerful response.
Reactivity is a weak response.

For those who have participated in a basic GTLYW Workshop, please consider our new workshop, "Conscious and Connected Parenting" in February. We teach you how to be dialogical and powerful with your children.

For an old classic try, *The Miracle of Dialogue*, by Ruel Howe.

Hope you have wonderful, joyful, and connected holidays with your loved ones,
David and Donna

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