

Choose Your Reaction

In John 13: 34-35 Jesus says “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Whenever your feelings are stirred try to begin thinking before you launch an accusation. Please remember and never forget: **The measure of your ability to demonstrate love is indicated by the manner in which you choose to react when something opposes your desire.**

- Do you say angry, hurtful, accusatory things instead of making an inquiry? When you believe the source of your stirred feelings originates with a person, your best course of action is to seek clarification by asking a question. Once you deliver aggressive hurtful statements, the pain you deliver will impact the receiver negatively. It is unfair to hurt someone then expect that person to care for you in the midst of their pain.
- Do you intentionally perform hurtful actions, spite? When performing under confusion caused by a misperception, spitefulness will pour gasoline onto the fire of hurt.
- At times, do you demonstrate a lesser regard for a person when their actions do not line up with your desire?
- Insecurity and hurt cause a misplaced need to demonstrate strength which will in turn cause us to be inconsiderate.
- When focused on self we tend to respond hurtfully, perceive the receiver’s reaction as defensive anger, then contribute more hurt. Do you choose to respond lovingly by expressing what happened to stir your feelings and how it made you feel? If you do this first and begin listening, you will gather all the information needed to soothe your emotions. Doing this can prevent all of the above dysfunction from occurring.

The point at which you accuse or attack verbally or physically is the point at which you become an abuser. Viewing your actions as defensive or offensive does not change that fact. Hurt triggers defenses, self-protective mechanisms. These mechanisms will most often lead to dysfunctional communication.

Hurtful accusations and attacks will likely shut down the receiver’s intelligent response when they are engulfed in pain. If the person you verbally injure asks a question, give a mature, intelligent response not a simple reply.

We should be ever so careful to use the position we occupy in the lives of others to demonstrate love, to nurture, and protect. We must decide how we want to appear in the eyes of others and make choices that support that decision.

