



This Week With

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Reaction Management Worksheet

1. **Observe others.** Play the role of an observer this week. Pay attention when others are angry with each other or with something that's bothering them. In general, do people tend to attack the problem or the person? Do we tend to engage mainly in solution-making, or fault-finding and blaming? Do people tend to look for and take responsibility for their role in whatever irritates or angers them?

2. **Monitor yourself.** Play the role of participant/observer in your own life. Watch for and act on opportunities to adjust your own behavior when you're annoyed or angry.

3. **'Catch yourself in the act' of reacting ('CYSITA').** When anger symptoms alert you, remember to reach in and 'Stop' the action. Put yourself on 'pause' or 'on hold' mentally, and begin deep nasal breathing, enabling yourself to think, rather than simply react. Then process the situation using the guide below.

4. **Use our mantra: 'Stop and Breathe. Think and Choose,'** when you feel yourself becoming agitated, irritated, frustrated or angry.

5. **Train yourself in deep nasal breathing.** Practice Navy SEALs '4x4 Breathing.' Breathe in to the count of four. Hold for the count of four. Breathe out to the count of four. Hold for a count of four. Repeat for five minutes minimum daily. (Sit up straight. Breathe in and out through your nostrils, filling your diaphragm (abdomen) first, then drawing your breath upward to fill your lungs; then exhale slowly and completely.)

6. **Process the situation.** When an immediate response isn't required take time to 'Think' systematically – to process the situation. Our 'seven silent questions' of situation processing worksheet is a useful aid (below).

7. **Be patient with yourself.** Most of us are dealing with a serious habit-forming challenge when we begin to practice reaction management, and we have to expect that we will falter. To this day (after almost 40 years of practice) I still catch myself in the act of reacting – typically blaming someone or something (city hall?) for something that annoys me. The key is to recover, move on and celebrate our successes.
