



To the amazing parents in our ministry,

What is the difference between Reacting and Responding?

Actually there is a huge difference. If you and I can understand that difference we can build bridges instead of walls in our relationships with teenagers.

This month's online parenting class is focused on helping you as a parent learn some tips to "Respond" to your teenager in a healthy way.

I want to start by sharing a great example from an experienced mom of teenagers:

It was my favorite lip gloss! Burt's Bees (the tinted one, no less) is not exactly cheap. And did I mention it was my favorite? What could she possibly have been thinking? Every sane person knows that when lip balm is left in a warm car, it tends to get soft. So what would possess her to twist it till it was all the way up and then try to push it back down into the tube? Really? Of course it split right down the middle.

This would have been the perfect time to teach my teen the difference between reacting and responding. I failed. Again. There were so many ways to do this better. I could have said anything other than "What in the world do you think you are doing? Did you even think through that?"

How am I ever going to teach my child this lesson if I can't get it myself? Reactions are governed by emotions, while responses are governed by the ability to think through the situation. That means closing our mouths and not saying the first thing that pops into our heads, which is usually critical.

Not so easy when our teen is hurling their attitude at us with acute precision. Don't kid yourself. They know our buttons and are not above pushing them. Over and over and over. I think they have created a fantasy league where they earn points by pushing us over the edge again and again! But how different would our relationships be with our teens if we responded rationally to their attacks instead of reacting immediately?

There is one tool that I use that is helping me learn this concept. It's called breathing. I know, profound, right? But you would be amazed at how well this works! First, it gives you a moment to lower your blood pressure. Extra oxygen always helps. And those few precious moments it takes to breathe a few extra times may be the difference between teaching them and arguing with them. I will take teaching every time!



I want to challenge all of the parents in our ministry to memorize with me a short verse to help us “breathe” when our teenager’s stir up anger in us.

So, your homework for this week’s class is to look up Proverbs 15:1, memorize it, and repeat it to yourself every time your teenager tries to push your buttons. Are you with me?

As always, if you have any questions or prayer concerns please respond to this email and let me know.

Your Parenting Partner,
Glenn and the Woodcrest Student Ministries team