



All Shook Up!

When we respond to a situation without taking time to think about how to respond, we are being reactive. When we are reactive, we let the situation determine our response. In other words, we allow circumstances to control our behavior. Reactive people often blame others for their circumstances instead of taking responsibility for themselves.

Being proactive means that we are always free to choose how we respond to any given situation. When we become proactive, we examine our thoughts and behaviors before reacting.

For this demonstration we need two volunteers. Give one volunteer a small bottle or can of soda, labeled "Reactive". Give the other volunteer a small bottle of water labeled "Proactive."

1. Tell the students, I am going to read some statements. You (the class) will vote on which statement sounds like a reactive statement or a proactive statement. Your vote will decide which person will shake up his or her bottle: "Reactive" or "Proactive."

2. Read each of the following statements and quickly have the class vote on if the statement shows being reactive or proactive. Have the winning vote shake their bottle vigorously for two seconds after each vote.

Statements to read:

- Your sister ruins your favorite shirt and you storm into her room screaming at her.
- Your best friend says something that hurts your feelings and you decide he must be having a bad day, so you blow it off.
- Somebody says something rude to you, so you push them.
- Your dad makes a really ridiculous comment in front of your friends, so you yell at him and tell him to leave you alone.



- Your parents won't let you spend the night at your friend's house. You stomp off and slam the door to your room.
- Your little brother keeps asking you to read to him and you don't want to, but you decide to do it anyway.
- Someone offers you to throw rocks at cars and you say no.
- Your mom says, "We need to talk," and you say, "Not now," because you know it's going to end up in a fight.
- A classmate makes fun of you for getting a question wrong in class. You get upset and sulk the rest of the day.

3. Ask, "What will happen to our proactive volunteer if I ask him or her to open the bottle? What about our reactive volunteer?"

Point: Reactive people are like this bottle of soda. The soda gets shaken up and eventually will explode. Proactive people are more like the water bottle. They think before they respond and you can shake them up all you want, but nothing happens.

Have a discussion with the following questions:

1. Do you ever feel like the reactive bottle? Why or why not?
2. What are the benefits of being more like the proactive bottle?



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