We Can Only Control Our Response

Many of us may understand that we can’t control what others do or say, we can only control our response. But no matter your age, that is easier said than done. However, with practice, you can develop a set of skills to help you better manage your emotions.

In this lesson, you will explore how understanding your own emotions can help you understand and work more effectively with other people.

**ASK:** Look at the person next to you. Can you control what they do? Can you control what they say?

Guide the discussion so that the bottom line is that we can’t really control what others do or say.

**SAY:** People, even our friends and family, will do or say things we don’t like, things that are mean, things that hurt, and things that make us mad, sad, and even glad. We can’t control them. We can only control how we respond or react to what they do or say. This lesson will help us practice how to respond more positively to negative situations.

Display Discovering Projectable 2.3.1 to the class. Read the scenario aloud.

**ASK:** What was the situation?

- What emotions did Ella feel?
- What thoughts were causing these emotions?
- What could she control? What can’t she control?
- What did you notice about the relationship among thoughts, actions, and feelings in this situation?

**SAY:** In a tough situation, it helps to analyze our negative emotions objectively and then make the choice to respond more positively and learn from the situation.

**LAST YEAR,** students learned to manage anger through understanding how emotions, thoughts, and actions go together.

**THIS YEAR,** students will learn how to respond positively to negative situations.
Turning negatives into positives

Use a creative grouping strategy to divide the class in small groups. Display Connecting Projectable 2.3.2. Tell the students the projectable shows a process you can use to respond positively to a negative situation. Read the stages and ask students to think of an example from their lives when someone they know showed strong negative emotions.

ASK: What was the situation?

- What emotions did the person show?
- Using this process how could they have responded more positively?

SAY: Let’s apply this process to a common situation. You are working at the drive-through of a fast-food restaurant. A co-worker gives you the order of a hamburger, fries, and soft drink, and you hand the customer his bag. He drives away, but later shows up and complains that his order was wrong. In front of everyone, your manager criticizes you for being careless.

ASK: How would you feel in this situation? Let’s use the process to help you react more positively.

PRACTICING 20 MINUTES

Leave the Connecting Projectable on display and distribute Student Handout: Practicing. Review the instructions. When the activity is completed have groups share their responses to the various situations (as time permits). Use the Connecting Projectable and have the groups go through their response.

ASK: What emotion did you respond with?

- What thoughts caused you to respond this way?
- How did you apply positive thinking to your reaction?
- Are there similar situations in your life in which you can apply what we’ve been discussing? What are they?
Reflecting
Display Reflecting Project 2.3.3 Students use their class notebooks to reflect individually and as a class on what they learned in this lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What?</th>
<th>How can you learn to react more positively to negative situations?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So What?</td>
<td>How will this help you be more effective in relating to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now What?</td>
<td>How will this understanding help you as you face new situations in work or in continuing your education?</td>
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</tbody>
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A APPLYING 2 MINUTES

Distribute Student Handout: Applying. Over the next few days have the students observe a situation that causes them to react negatively. Complete the handout as a homework assignment for the next class.

ASSESSING

PRACTICING (INFORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT) Check for understanding of the lesson by reviewing their responses to the Reflecting Activity.

APPLYING (FORMAL FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT) Review the Student Handout: Applying to assess how well students understand the process of understanding their emotions, thinking through the causes, and responding positively.

BUILDING SKILLS BEYOND THE LESSON

Keep a Journal!

PRACTICING Have students keep a journal and record different experiences and their emotional reactions to them. They should also indicate how they used their thinking process to understand the causes of the emotions.

Discuss It!

APPLYING Reinforce the process by having groups review their Apllying handout experiences and discussing what they felt, what they thought, and how they responded.

Life Online!

APPLYING Ask students how the lesson applies to life online. How do people control their emotions in dealing with each other every day, or how do they fail to? Ask students if they find a difference online from real life.

Write a Skit!

PRACTICING Have students or groups write and perform a skit for an elementary class that models the process used to respond positively to a negative situation. Then arrange time to perform the skit.