

Chapter 6 : Emotional Response

The reason that we fear sharing feelings can be due, in part, to emotional responses that are inadequate. Our emotional responses are our habits of dealing with those feelings that we have about ourselves and others that say whether or not each of us is on target as a human being.

What all emotional response gets down to is helping ourselves and helping others. Good emotional response consists of habits that really work, habits that bring us help and habits that make helping others easier.

This chapter offers suggestions on emotional response. Any habit of emotional response can be tested in terms of results. If the habit brings us help and makes helping others easier, it is good. If the habit keeps us from help or makes helping others more difficult, it is bad.

Like any other habit, our emotional responses work for us without our thinking about them. To operate as human beings, we must have habits but often we do not know we are using them. The use is not something consciously done.

We need to increase our awareness that we have habits of emotional response and we need to screen them to see if they are adequate. Because emotional response is an experiential thing, it can be learned thru new experience.

The habits of emotional response are learned at an early age when the mind and experience are limited. We learn emotional response first from our parents, then brothers and sisters, then friends.

There are four elements to emotional response: 1) genuine desires, 2) risking, 3) understanding and 4) acceptance (abbreviated as GRUA). The remainder of this chapter discusses these elements. The format is in the form of diagnostics: each element is briefly described; symptoms indicating a weakness in the element are described; a possible cause of the symptom is isolated; and suggestions are offered.

Genuine Desires

Deep inside ourselves we have feelings that tell us what we want. These are our genuine desires. We stay in touch with our genuine desires by paying attention to these feelings that tell us what want. We stay in touch with our genuine desires by sharing them with another that we are very close to. We stay in touch with our genuine desires by putting into practice our beliefs.

We can see that staying in touch is a long and precarious chain susceptible to break down. When we realize that genuine desires are the simplest way to our happiness, the journey becomes more certain.

Genuine desires are washed by experience. The Holy Spirit will

not let us do something that is not good for us without giving us a sign.

That sign may be pain or it may be joy. Irrespective of the sign, we will be sufficiently guided to know our desires are genuine.

Symptom of Violation Feeling forced to do something, believing your way is best for everyone.

Possible Cause Not understanding or not paying attention to genuine desires.

Suggestions Most of us think of helping others in terms of what has been good for us. Unless we can help others, we cannot satisfy the basic needs of belongingness and respect.

The problem is that we try to give too much. We must simplify our thinking. We help others when we help them operate in an area of meaningful expansion for themselves. This means that when they tell us what they want, we can best assist them by doing what they are asking of us. This means doing things for them that take time and effort and make it possible for them to succeed. This is as easy as it sounds. They tell us what they want. We help them get it.

We do not help others when we seek them to operate in our areas of meaningful expansion for ourselves. Doing so can keep another from paying attention to his own genuine desires, from listening to those feelings deep within himself that say "This will be good for me."

Each person will travel his own unique road thru life. He must learn to pay attention to his unique goals if he is to be master of his journey.

Actually, the Lord is master of our journey but we must choose Him. We have free will. We can choose Him or not.

Confidence in genuine desires is the gate that must be passed thru if creativity and freedom are to begin. Genuine desires are the only goals that adequately take into consideration who we really are, our strengths and our weaknesses. They have internal consistency.

Internal consistency does not mean accuracy. The way each of us views reality may not be a reflection of real resources and real pitfalls. We may be inclined onward with the enthusiasm that comes from internal consistency and in our ignorance fail to see one or more essential elements. We can use the vision of those that we are close to, to help us see things we do not.

We can help those that we are close to, to see important things that we know will be good for them. We can teach another important skills that we know. We can show others the wisdom of certain approaches. We can even ask others to help us attain our goals.

On the other hand, if we cause others to lose confidence in their

genuine desires, we are missing the point all together.

Often we give too much advice. Often we appear to be too critical. There is a sure fire antidote.

Referring back to the Loquate Model found in Chapter 2, we can determine how to be most helpful to others by taking the five levels of success into consideration. Each level of success refers to a stage in the diagram. The diagram describes achieving success over a period of time. The five levels refer to various points in time.

The first level occurs when a person has a genuine desire and wonders if he can control the elements needed for success. We can be helpful at this point by encouraging the person with the genuine desire. When we have faith in others, it brings out the Lord in them. When others seek the Lord, they seek the good. We cannot know what form that good may take but we can know it will be a perfect good because God's will is perfect.

The second level occurs when a person performs some action to attain a goal. We can be helpful at this point only by helping the person succeed. When we see some element for success is missing, by simply providing that element, we are being as helpful as we can be.

When a person is trying something new, he is under pressure. Trying to teach the person engaged in this new undertaking the right way to do something is inappropriate, because the person is doing all he can to stay above water.

The third level occurs when a person has succeeded one or more times with the help of others. At this point the person will wish to supply the missing elements himself. We can be helpful by teaching the person the bare essentials he will need to succeed on his own.

We must gradually remove ourselves from the picture by providing more and more leeway (time and freedom) to try and retry the basic elements needed for success that we have taught him.

The fourth level occurs when the person knows he can control on his own, the necessary elements of success. We can be helpful at this point by telling the person in no uncertain terms that he can control the basic elements needed for success.

It would be inappropriate and unnecessary to teach the person the finer details at this time. He may take it too imply that we do not see the success he has attained.

The fifth level occurs when the person is stimulated to take on a new more demanding goal making use of the elements he can control. The appropriate help at this level is to teach the person the finer details.

By taking into consideration a person's level of success, we can give him the help he wants and needs. In so doing he will look to us with genuine appreciation and admiration, not only for our help, but

also for our understanding.

Risking

Our feelings tell us whether or not we are on target as a human being. Feeling good means being on target. Feeling bad means being off target. Nothing is all good or all bad. Risking means sharing how we feel with someone else. When our conversations do not relate to either person's attempt to be on target as a human being, the natural reaction is "What a boring conversation!"

Symptom of Violation Dull conversations, long conversations, conversations that do not bring us closer to others.

Possible Cause We do not risk enough.

Suggestions Others have feelings about us as we have about them that say whether or not each of us is on target as a human being. These feelings relate to primary values. By bringing these feelings out, we bring out our personal uniqueness.

Personal uniqueness is an ever changing thing. By sharing feelings we help others find their genuine desires. The biggest part of the problem is learning to deal with risk.

We can and often do get burned in the process of risking. Some people treat our feelings as though they did not exist, were not important or are childish. The risk we feel is that we will not be accepted.

It helps to clearly understand the ramifications of risking. Faced with a decision to risk or not the possible outcomes are:

1. Risking - the outcome will lean more towards one or the other of the following:

Rejection	VS	Self Improvement
		Closer Relationships

2. Not risking and living in the twilight of doubt.

Psychologists tell us feelings are meant to be shared. it takes considerable energy to hold in our true feelings. By treating our feelings with respect, they become more distinct, less confusing, and more valuable to us. Growth requires risking.

We can use our feelings as a guide to things to talk about-- the stronger our feelings, the more interesting and relevant will be our conversations. At the risk of repetition, if we do not think we should say something, we should not say it. If we are in doubt, we should bring it up.

Our acceptance of criticism can make it easier to risk. When others seem very critical of us, taking that criticism as an indication that a problem may exist and that a rethinking may be in order is more helpful to us than taking that criticism as a personal affront.

In almost every instance there is something valuable to be learned from criticism. The big person uses criticism to his advantage. He entertains the possibility that there may be something to what he has just been told and he uses it for self improvement. However, he does not accept the opinion of another, even a so called expert, if it does not first make good sense to him.

When we risk, we seek the Lord. This is so because the Lord is truth.

Truth can only be found by risking. There is no other way.

Understanding

When a person communicates his feelings to us, he trusts that we will hear them, he hopes that we will care, and he has faith that we will see the valid reason of how they came about. When we do not meet his expectations, we are said to be lacking in understanding.

If a person does not feel he is being understood by us, his natural reaction is "What is the use of sharing feelings? This person does not understand me so why continue sharing feelings?"

Symptom of Violation Person stops communicating feelings to us.

Possible Cause We lack understanding.

Suggestions When people share their feelings with us, they trust we will hear them... but they cannot be certain we will.

They need our help. We need to let them know that we have heard their feelings. Everyone needs our emotional understanding. When we can give it, we are a joy to be with.

Emotional understanding does not mean doing something about the way others feel. That falls into the category of "Acceptance," (next element to be discussed). All emotional understanding means is that we understand:

- a. how a person feels, and
- b. why he feels that way.

By communicating understanding, we help others trust their feelings and encourage them to help us trust ours.

When another repeats something or discouragingly drops the matter, they wonder if we have heard what they are trying to say. By our repeating what they have told us, using their same words, we remove the doubt.

Like anything else, the more we work at it, the better we will become. If we are doing our honest best to try to understand, it is never necessary or desirable to fake understanding.

If we do not understand we can say so. Then by repeating as much as we can of what the other has told us, discrepancies can be cleared up and a new level of understanding reached.

We can increase understanding thru non verbal messages as well. People telegraph things to us. By using our impressions, intuitions and hunches, and taking stabs communicating them, we can grow in understanding.

When we wish to know another person more intimately, we can try to be more empathetic as listeners. Those who follow the outline below will grow in empathy.

There are three levels of listening.

1. Listening at someone...not interested in the person or the subject.
2. Listening to someone...interested in the subject but not the person.
3. Listening empathetically...interested in the subject and the person, and showing it by taking a stab at how he feels.

The Lord would have us understand all who come before us. The Lord would have us have empathy. The Lord would have us seek Him in others.

We now turn to the fifth step of the **Loquate Experience**. The fifth step is this.

Loquate Experience Fifth Step : Held each person to be sovereign over his own beliefs and feelings.

We begin thru understanding. We are always to be willing to hear another. We are to make room for others to express their feelings.

We are to let each person be sovereign over his own feelings. We can't say "Don't feel that way." Its like saying "Don't be sick."

We can pursue the truth and remain close. We can also share our feelings about another by being honest when in doubt, tending toward sharing all of our feelings.

Each person is free to choose what he believes in. No one else can or should try to be sovereign over another's beliefs.

Anytime we choose another, we place that other over ourself. Anytime we choose the Lord, we place Him over us.

We are to let each person come to the Lord. If we choose the Lord we are sovereign over our selves and we seek to bring the Lord out in our selves.

If any wish to be with us in Loquate, they will try to hear us. If any wish to be with those in their respective churches, they will try to hear them. If any wish to be with any, they will try to hear them.

This is so because the only way we can be with another is to hear them. We cannot convince them that they should not hear themselves. That would be harmful. The only thing we can do is to hear them and encourage them to hear themselves.

Often we are misled. We do not know our own will. We have no alternative before us which makes sense to us more than the alternative that we are following. This is as it should be.

If we are to be with another, we are to encourage them to hear God in their hearts. We do this when we permit another to be sovereign over his own beliefs and feelings.

Hearing God in our hearts is a process that will never end. We will forever be hearing God in our hearts. We will forever be coming to Him.

Still we are called on to give an example. The example that we are called on to give is our very lives. Our lives tell others what we know. What we know is this. God is with us.

This means we are to be willing to subject ourselves to all those around us. In so doing, by our example we will show that we hear them. The only exception is sin.

We are never to sin. God wills it. By not sinning, we come to Him. That is what coming to Him means.

When we subject ourselves to all those around us, we may suffer. If we suffer as a result of hearing another, we will draw that other to the Lord. He will see our suffering. Because we love him, he will seek to change. He will seek to hear us. He will come to the Lord.

Suffering on this earth for those we love is a privilege that God grants to us. When we suffer for another, we partake in His Son's offering of his spotless life in payment for our sins. When we suffer for another, we remove the stain of our sins. We will know we have suffered enough when we suffer no longer.

God's will for us will work most powerfully on this earth. Thru

us, He will draw many to Him. He will draw them thru our suffering.

If any man is spotless, God will not permit him to suffer. That is His covenant that He made with us the moment Christ died for our sins. That covenant will not be broken.

This means that we will be granted the most magnificent of blessings. Thru our love of those around us, we will be permitted to draw them to the Lord. This will occur when we are spotless.

We become spotless by hearing God in our hearts. We become spotless by not sinning. We become spotless by subjecting ourselves to all those around us. We become spotless by submitting to their will just as we submit to God's will.

Acceptance

If a person does not feel we accept him, his natural feeling is "What's the use of going any further? This person does not accept me. So why push it?"

Symptom of Violation Person becomes defensive or seems to avoid us.

Possible Cause We have not communicated a positive regard or genuine appreciation.

Suggestions What do you find when you really get to know people? Do you usually find that you accept the total person or reject him? No one expects his behavior to be accepted in total but he does expect to be accepted as a total person. Being accepted as a total person means being accepted as a complete person, complete with our feelings. By the total person, we mean the complete person with his feelings.

Positive Regard

Our feelings as they stand are an integral part of us. However, if underlying assumptions change, our feelings change.

Truth is important. That is why risking is important, but first we must adequately communicate positive regard. We do this by accepting the total person.

We do this when we see the Lord in another. We are all to come to the Lord. Coming to the Lord means leaving behind dark ways and coming forth into light. Seeing the Lord in another means having a positive regard for another.

If we usually reject the total person, we may be seeking something in others that is not the Lord. For the Lord is in each of us, waiting to be chosen. If we seek the Lord in others, the Holy Spirit will guide us.

If we usually reject the total person, we may be seeking

something in others that is not the Lord. What we are looking for in others can only come from us. We must sort thru our desires to make sure they are genuinely ours.

When we have heard the Holy Spirit within us, we will seek to bring Him into our lives. He comes to us thru our genuine desires. These desires lead us to those we seek to be with. These desires lead us to our selves.

Our genuine desires take into consideration what will be good for us because of who we really are. Our genuine desires cannot surface until they are washed by communicating them to others and having an open mind. This insures that we not only seek worthwhile goals but also see true alternatives that will take us to those goals.

If we usually accept the total person, we have a significant advantage. With each new person we meet, until proven otherwise we can work under the assumption that once we get to know this person, we will accept him.

This faith and trust makes it easier to convey a positive regard that is not phony. It lays a natural foundation for acceptance.

Genuine Appreciation

We show acceptance through genuine appreciation. There are different ways to show genuine appreciation but genuine appreciation is always appreciation based on understanding.

We cannot communicate acceptance without a basic understanding of why a person believed, acted or felt as he did. Otherwise we are making too many assumptions that can work against us.

If we are wrong about an assumption and try to show acceptance, it may appear that we will accept anything. Worse yet, if we are wrong about an assumption and try to show non-acceptance, it may appear as though we are looking for ways to reject this person. Neither of these creates an impression that we want to convey. We must have a sound enough understanding before we can communicate true acceptance.

We can accept a person in total but not accept specific behavior. In those instances where we care enough about a person to communicate non-acceptance of specific behavior, a few additional suggestions are offered:

a. We should make our non-acceptance as specific as possible, so the person knows we are not rejecting everything he has ever done.

b. Suggesting a better alternative form of behavior is helpful. It does not leave the person with only a sense of lacking. It permits the person to compare the advantages and disadvantages of both forms of behavior. It verifies to us the validity of our non-acceptance.

c. If we cannot suggest a better form of behavior we must accept

the possibility that our non-acceptance could be more a lack of understanding than a lack of acceptance.

d. When we communicate non-acceptance, we must expect an initial reaction of rejection. We should try to communicate all the things that are in our mind, giving the other person the right to accept or reject our conclusion and then be willing to drop the matter. Oftentimes it takes time or a change of circumstances for advice to sink in.

e. We should give criticism in private. In this way, we run less risk of forcing the person to defend his position in front of others.

We now turn to the sixth step of the **Loquate Experience**. The sixth step is this.

Loquate Experience Sixth Step : Gave others room for themselves to feel bad.

Whether a person comes to understand specific behavior that he needs to change thru us or on his own, we need to give him room to feel bad.

Some groups seem to say everything should come up roses all of the time. This is counter productive. It encourages the group to accept everything the leader of the group does, including the bad, or accepting everything the members of the group do, including the bad.

Seeing only good, at best makes us close our eyes to bad. Our feelings are meant to be shared. It begins with the person closest to us and moves outward from there.

We need to improve our habits of emotional response in order to do this. Some habits are good and some habits are bad. By hearing alternatives from others, we replace bad habits with good habits.

Giving others room to feel bad means giving them what they need to work thru whatever is before them. It means understanding them and helping them.

Their problem may seem minor to us because we don't have the problem. But giving others room to feel bad means not presenting viewpoints that imply the problem is minor. It means don't be a mood breaker. Let the feelings be what they are.

Giving others room to feel bad means still being there over time as they come to the truth. It means communicating to a person that your feeling for them has not changed. It means telling them that you have confidence that in time they will work thru it.

Giving another room to feel bad means learning to feel frustrated for a while, along with our friend. If failure occurs along the way, we are called on to pick up the failing person, dust him off and send him on his way.

Giving another room to feel bad means being joyful. When a person is trying to change his behavior overcoming a weakness, there is reason to be joyful not sad. If we are sad, we are only seeing the ways of the dark one not the ways of the Lord.

If we are joyful, we are seeing the Lord's ways. If we are honestly trying to come to the Lord, we are doing all that the Lord asks of us.

Giving ourselves and others room to feel bad means enduring suffering for a worthy cause. Giving others room to feel bad means being willing to share concerns about each other, because it is not just the end that counts but each step along the way.

Coming to the Lord is seeking perfection. We will never be perfect. Yet we are called on to improve ourselves in every way that we know we should improve ourselves.

To not do this is against the will of God. This is so because God does not want us to suffer nor does He want those around us to suffer because of our failings.