



Be Proactive

October 16, 2017

Students Will Be Able To

- 1. Differentiate between proactive and reactive choices*
 - 2. Identify areas where they can be proactive instead of reactive*
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Materials

Nothing special. Tape or string if you have it for activity 3.

Introduction

Every choice we make falls into one of two categories: proactive and reactive. The activities that follow give students a chance to see how proactive choices provide control while reactive choices give control to someone else. Proactive people make choices based on values. They think before they act. Reactive people place blame on circumstance and inadvertently get stuck in bad situations because they don't take control of their own response.

Activity 1 – Act or React

In this activity, students will hear scenarios and possible responses. They will identify which responses are proactive and which are reactive. They will then predict the outcomes of some of those responses.

Activity 2 – Who's in Control?

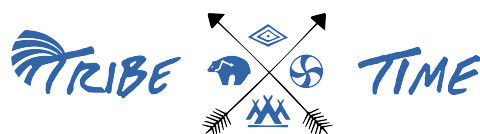
In this activity, students will answer questions about themselves that help them assess their own mindset when it comes to making choices. It uses language as a diagnostic tool to evaluate that mindset and provide a look at how we talk about ourselves can affect how proactive or reactive we end up being.

Activity 3 – The Circle of Life

Students will work through things that have happened and can happen to them in life. They'll then place those events inside or outside a circle in the room and then talk about how they can respond to things even if they are things they can't control.

Activity 4 – Make it a Habit

Students will select a choice where they have been or would be reactive from a previous activity. They will then help each other in pairs to identify specific steps they can take to make responding proactively in that situation a habit.





Act or React

Activity 1

Read some or all of the following scenarios to the class. For each scenario, ask students to write down or shout out (depending on the class) possible responses. As they do, sort the responses on the board into proactive and reactive responses. We've provided some possible responses to get you going, but they are by no means an exhaustive list.

At the end of each scenario discussion, choose a student to predict for the class the outcome of some of the more common responses.

Scenario 1: Social Media Monster

"You invite a friend to hang out after school and she tells you she has to stay home and finish homework because her mom is going to take her phone away if her grades don't get better fast. Later that night, you see posts from someone else who tagged your friend in their pictures at another friend's house. In other words, she lied to you about having to stay home and work on homework so that she could go and hang out with someone else."

Possible Responses

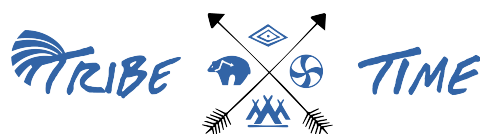
- Chew her out. Let her know how angry you are, and make a point of shoving past her when you see her in the halls at school.
- Confront her and share how you feel about the fact that she lied to you.
- Decide that she's a two-faced liar and give her the silent treatment.
- Mope and feel depressed that she left you out and lied to you.
- Realize that she has weaknesses just like you, and that you occasionally don't include her in things without really meaning to hurt her feelings.
- Go out of your way to exclude her. After all, she did it to you.
- Forgive her and give her a second chance.
- Do nothing. Act like it never happened.

Scenario 2: Overlooked

"You get a job at Stokes as a bagger and have been doing it every Friday and Saturday for almost 6 months. You've made a point of being dependable, picking up shifts when people call in sick, and just generally being dependable. However, when a position working in the dairy – the best job at the store, in your opinion – opens up, your boss gives it to a guy who just started a few weeks ago."

Possible Responses

- Pick the new guy apart any chance you get so you can show your boss and your coworkers that you would have been a better choice.
- Continue working hard to be dependable so that next time something comes up, your boss thinks of you for the promotion.
- Text your boss and ask why he doesn't like you



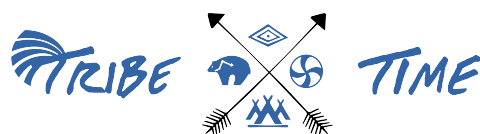


- If you determine you're probably not going to get any future promotions, start looking for another job.
- Complain to your coworkers whenever you can about how unfair your boss is and how stupid you think the decision is to promote the other guy.
- Quick working so hard. After all, it doesn't seem to be paying off.
- Talk to your boss about why he made that decision. Take his suggestions and use them to get better at your job.
- Suggest that you and the other employee both be trained in the dairy so that you can help each other out when one of you can't work a shift.

Scenario 3: The Bombed Test

"You took a test in math and totally bombed it. You thought you knew your stuff, so it catches you off guard. You know your parents will be upset, and your teacher tells you he's surprised that you didn't do very well."

- Move on. Your parents will chew you out, but you can always hole up in your room when it's over.
- Complain to your friends and parents about how crappy your teacher is. It's his job, after all, to make sure you learn the stuff in the first place.
- Talk with the teacher after class to see if he can help you figure out where you went wrong and how you can fix it.
- Ask a friend that did well on the test to help you study so you can rework the test for a better grade.
- Give up. You've never been good at math, so this just proves that you're always going to tank your math classes. Better to accept it now.
- Ask your parents for help. You don't know how to get better, but you're willing to try.



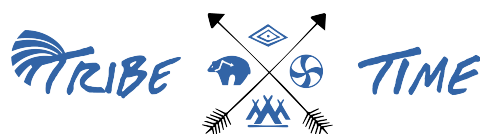


Activity 2: Who's in Control?

Divide students into pairs or groups of three. Give each group one of the following statements. For each statement, the group should discuss who's in control. Have each pair or group then explain their reasoning to the class.

- "That's me. That's just the way I am."
- "If my social studies teacher wasn't such a jerk, I'd do better in class."
- "I'm not good at math."
- "My parents won't let me hang out with any of my real friends."
- "My grades suck because I'm stupid."
- "I'm so depressed. My life just sucks right now."
- "That's so unfair! He pushed me first. I was just defending myself."
- "School lunch is gross."

Once students have shared their reasoning with the class, have them go back and rewrite the statement so that it puts them in control. Have them share these reworked statements with the class as well.





The Circle of Life

Activity 3

Have students make a vomit list of life events that have happened or can happen in their life.

A vomit list is just a list of things they spit out as they occur to you, and aren't careful or cleaned up. You then sort through the vomit later to see what you had for lunch. It follows the concepts of stream of consciousness and brainstorming, but with an emphasis on just getting as much out as fast as you can.

Their list can range from parents getting divorced to having a new baby, and from losing a friend to experiencing an earthquake. It can also be things they found major that others might not: a major project in Social Studies, a really bad haircut, getting their first iPhone, etc.

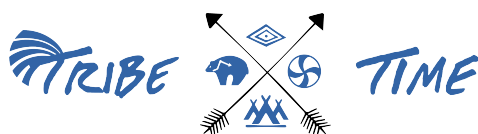
Once students have a list, have them pick a few and write them on strips of paper. They should be written so that others don't know what they are. Move all the desks or tables in the room to the outside and stand in a circle. Use masking tape or string to them make a smaller circle inside the circle of standing students.

Inner Circle (Inside the string or tape) = things you can control

Outer Circle (Outside the string or tape) = things you can't control

Student should then take turns throwing their paper into the larger circle (between the kids and the string) and the smaller circle (inside the string or tape) depending on whether or not they control whether or not it happens.

Once students have separated out what they wrote into things they can and can't control, pick out random papers from the inner and outer circles and talk about how you could approach each situation proactively or reactively. Where appropriate, have students help each other with strategies to take control when things are out of control.





Make it a Habit

Activity 4

Have students pick a choice from one of the previous activities. This choice should be one where they have been or think they would be reactive instead of proactive. In other words, these should be things they want to get better at handling if/when they occur.

Divide students into pairs and have them discuss first why they would be reactive instead of proactive, and then specific things they can do to be more proactive.

For example, if a student chooses getting mad at a sibling who keeps annoying him, the pair could talk about how that situation has led them to be reactive in the past, and then how they could make a habit of doing things that will ensure their response to such things in the future are proactive. For that scenario, talking with their sibling is a good first step. They could also ask their parents for advice, make a point of walking away or counting to ten before responding to the sibling, apologizing when the sibling gets annoying and you fall off the wagon and react instead of making a good choice, etc.

There are really a million ways to be proactive instead of reactive, but it all comes down to what we do before, during, and after such things that determines whether or not being proactive is a habit or just a wish.

