Responding When People Offend Us or Hurt Our Feelings

David Richo, PhD

A given of life is that people might offend us, hate us, or hurt our feelings. Here are three of the choices available to us when that happens.

A Primitive	A Commitment	An expression of
Reaction from our	to "Do no harm"	Unconditional
Reptilian Brain:	from our Ethical	Loving-kindness
	Sense of Moral	from our Spiritual
	Responsibility:	Consciousness:
We hurt or hate	We do not hurt	We do not hurt or hate
back.	or hate back.	back. We go one step
		further into virtuous
		action and do good to
		those who hurt or hate
		us. This may include
		continuing contact or
		simply goodwill
		toward them, wishing
		them the best without
		further contact.
		In all this we hold an
		intention to forgive.
We pay back.	We do not pay	We love back.
	back.	
We copy the	We act in a new	We show unconditional
other person.	way.	love.
We hear an	We hear a	We hear Michelle
avenger's voice:	mediator's	Obama: "When they go
"Do it too."	voice: "Don't	low, we go high." *
	do it."	
We become	We act in accord	We act in accord with
aggressive,	with moral	teachings such as
actively or	principles and a	the Sermon on the
passively. We	commitment to	Mount or the Buddhist
retaliate to "right	nonviolence. We	practice of loving-
the wrong" in	take the moral	kindness or a
accord with	high ground.	generous version of
street-rules.		the Golden Rule.
We are like the	We are like	We are Christ or
guys in the	Mr. Rogers or	Buddha in the world
Godfather movies.	Atticus Finch.	of today.

testosterone- driven ego-saving reaction of ill-will Ego-based, i.e., fear-based "I alone am important!" We are giving in to our dark side. Win-lose Win-lose Win-win by two people We grow in self- sweetness of revenge, i.e., the sense of power that we got back at the person/s who crossed us, and we are glad we can look good in the eyes of our gang. Our motivation is the promotion Meart-motivated respect for all people frespect for all people frespect for all people frespect because fre	An adrenaline/	An oxytocin/	An oxytocin-rich,
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^{*} The goal here is commitment to our personal standard of integrity not to show we are better than others.

The far right column is counter-intuitive. We are acting from our evolved higher self. We are converted by grace from selfishness to selflessness, a surrendering of ego-centeredness to love-centeredness. We then come to see that in our deepest identity we are love. Thus, our loving-kindness toward all beings is a manifestation of who we really are.

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