

Responding When People Offend Us or Hurt Our Feelings

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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 Reaction from our Reptilian Brain:	A Commitment to "Do no harm" from our Ethical Sense of Moral Responsibility:	An expression of Unconditional Loving-kindness from our Spiritual Consciousness:
We hurt or hate back.	We do not hurt or hate back.	We do not hurt or hate 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 back.	We love back.
We copy the other person.	We act in a new way.	We show unconditional love.
We hear an avenger's voice: "Do it too."	We hear a mediator's voice: "Don't do it."	We hear Michelle Obama: "When they go low, we go high." *
We become aggressive, actively or passively. We retaliate to "right the wrong" in accord with street-rules.	We act in accord with moral principles and a commitment to nonviolence. We take the moral high ground.	We act in accord with teachings such as the Sermon on the Mount or the Buddhist practice of loving-kindness or a generous version of the Golden Rule.
We are like the guys in the <i>Godfather</i> movies.	We are like Mr. Rogers or Atticus Finch.	We are Christ or Buddha in the world of today.

An adrenaline/ testosterone- driven ego-saving reaction of ill-will	An oxytocin/ heart-motivated respect for all people	An oxytocin-rich, open-hearted sense of human solidarity
Ego-based, i.e., fear-based	Humanism- based	Love-based
"I alone am important!"	"You are important too!"	"We are deeply linked!"
We are giving in to our dark side.	We are showing our love, caring, generosity, and compassion.	We are opening to a grace that expands and deepens our commitment to love.
Win-lose	Win-win by two people	Win-win by two connected individuals
We enjoy the 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.	We grow in self- respect because we are true to our personal standards no matter how others behave. We have found something sweeter than revenge.	We love ourselves and all beings more, we move toward enlightenment/ transformation—and we want that for everyone.
Our motivation is the promotion of our own ego.	Our motivation is caring for the common good.	Our motivation is birthing a world of justice, peace, and love.
Intimacy cannot happen in this i column.	Intimacy can happen in this column.	Intimacy deepens and flourishes in this column.

* 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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