

Manage Chaos

Addiction Blueprint™

By: Barbara Decker

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4 Ways to Shift the Ask / Respond Dynamic That Occurs with Addicted or Alcoholic Children

- ✓ **Have I taken at least 3 minutes to consider the request before responding?**

Set a timer if you want. There is a chaos in addiction, and your child will want you to immediately solve a problem. You are allowed to pause before replying. You are allowed to turn off your phone or not answer -- and then call back when you are ready. Responding in the heat of chaos can lead to regret. Remember, the disease may be what you are hearing; it is not your true child speaking.

Ask from Eric was: Will you pick me up 30 min away and drive me somewhere else. I'm stranded.

Me: Initially, I responded to the panic, got dressed and drove to pick him up. Later, I took my 3 minutes and asked him to call me back in 5 minutes for an answer.

- ✓ **Have I considered whether I am choosing to respond in a way that encourages long-term recovery OR whether I am choosing to respond in a way that eliminates a current pain point for myself or my child?**

Ask yourself: “Does my response encourage my child to move into recovery by providing loving, effective and clear boundaries that allow him/her to feel the natural consequences of their own choices.” or “Does my response just eliminate an immediate pain for my child and myself?”

If you decide your response will eliminate an immediate pain, that’s an ok choice to make. What’s important is that you consider which category your response is in and make the decision that is right for you and your family at this moment. You have the right to change your decision at any time.

My answer to the question depended on my frame of mind at the time.

By taking the 5 minutes, I could decide. When I chose to pick him up, I recognized that I did that because I wanted to eliminate an immediate pain for me (the pain of not having seen him in so long and wanting to see how he was.) And **I gave myself permission to be ok with that.** My needs matter too.

The times I decided not to pick him up, I was not as needy or was tired and just didn’t have it in me. In those instances, I gave myself permission to say no and recognized that this was providing him with an opportunity to choose recovery. And that is something I wanted to **do as often as I was able.**

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✓ **Am I calm enough to respond with love and kindness to my child?**

Remember that your child (underneath that addiction) is consumed with painful feelings. When you are being hammered by your child about this or that, it is easy to forget that it is the illness speaking... and it is so very hard to respond with a kind and loving tone of voice -- without accusations and negative comments.

Spend some time preparing to respond with love and kindness.

Consider taking a few minutes and just breathing - deep full breaths to settle your own body and mind.

Consider walking away and just saying "I will get back to you on that." Your child will not like that response, but it is still your right to use it. You may need to be creative and "go somewhere else" to remove yourself from the emotion of the moment. Maybe take a short walk, or take a bubble bath with music headsets on, or visit library or coffee shop. Maybe brainstorm some options (on paper) for how you can walk away, until you are ready and able to respond.

By taking the 5 minutes, I was able to center myself and get to a place where I could respond with love and kindness, even when I was saying no. Eric was angry when I said no - and I also had to work on skills to manage that.

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- ✓ I have jotted down the situation, my thinking, my decision and will jot down how that feels to me over time ... and what the impact is, if any, on me and on my child.

Start to keep track of the situations you consider, the decisions you make and how they impact you and your child. This will be useful as you consider later decisions.

I did this reliably. Sometimes, not until the next day. Making these notes allowed me to see what I had done before and what the result was. It helped me answer the 2nd question differently as time went on.

What's Next?



***Join me on my free,
confidential workshop,
How To Encourage
Your Child's Recovery
While You Reclaim
Your Own Life
Using My Breakthrough
Love Another Way™
Formula***



***Save Your
Seat***

Looking forward to "meeting" you soon &
helping you with this important issue.



————— *Barbara*