



# Reactive to Creative

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Hard work and creativity are equally important to successfully developing and implementing new ideas, both personally and in the business world. It can be argued that insanity is the antithesis of creativity. Consider Albert Einstein's thoughts on what constitutes insane behavior.

*Insanity is*

*Doing the same thing*

*Over and over*

*And expecting a different result.*

Looking at this quote more carefully, you might ask why a person would continue to engage in obviously self-destructive behavior, especially if it is destructive in business and in one's personal life. One reason is that we become conditioned throughout our lifetime to react automatically to certain stimuli with our own programmed patterns. To create meaningful change, it is critical to break up these compulsive links. You must reprogram your response to unpleasant stimuli. There are three steps in reprogramming your nervous system.

1) Awareness

2) Separation

3) Creating new circuits

Awareness is the link to every aspect of The DOC Journey, which is a metaphor for your life. Awareness is the essence of life, human relationships, and thriving. A basic problem is that anger and anxiety are the core components of the unconscious brain. It is about survival and only about you. The blood flow to the frontal lobe of your brain decreases and you cannot think clearly. Anytime you are anxious or angry, you are in a patterned response based on past experiences that were threatening. You have completely lost awareness of the situation that caused the reaction.

Anger is the antithesis of awareness. Yet in chronic pain you are trapped and understandably angry. Anger completely blocks awareness by definition. Yet you need to become aware to break through the anger barrier. It is a terribly vicious cycle and that is why it requires tools and persistence to move through anger.

## **Reactive versus Creative**

The difference between these two words – and these two concepts – is that in the word “creative,” the “C” (which can mean ‘see’) is at the beginning. You must understand and see a problem first before you can solve it. In “reactive” the “C” (‘see’) is buried in the middle of the word. The location of the letter “C/see” can be thought of as reflecting the concepts these words convey. It's a good way to remember why you cannot be creative in problem solving if you are in a reactive mode.

## **Awareness**

The first step in problem solving is *seeing* ALL aspects of a given problem AND having a *choice* in how to respond. To be creative, the “C/see” needs to be first. Whenever you are anxious, or worse angry, you are in a patterned, conditioned, automatic reaction. All of us know that certain phrases, behaviors, situations, people,

etc. will elicit a fairly predictable and rapid reaction. You are reacting before you have even absorbed or comprehended the full scope of the problem. Consequently, you may make a flawed decision. Unfortunately, these programmed reactions become stronger with age and repetition. The phrase, “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” is an accurate phrase. It is not that the dog cannot be taught. He or she must be open to being taught.



### **Social and political rhetoric**

A step each of us can take is to first become aware of our own personal reactive patterns. The methods to disrupt the compulsive links of conditioned behavior are easily available but aren't widely adopted. Patterns of behavior are programmed from birth until the teenage years. This “download” includes the dysfunctional patterns from your parents. From puberty onward your entire life is either an adoption or rebellion to this early programming. In other words, your whole life is a reaction to this initial database.

The first step is to become aware of these patterns. The traditional psychological approach can help you increase your awareness, but it generally doesn't teach and implement the tools to create new neurological circuits. There are many methods of doing this. Instead of having a “stimulus-automatic response” situation, you now have a “stimulus-choice of response” scenario.



It is helpful to keep aware of both of these two words throughout the day. You can quickly see that you are in a reaction and can switch into a creative mode. Experiencing that creativity is not only effective, it's more enjoyable.

Reactive

Creative

After first “seeing” both your global and day-to-day reactions, you will have the power to create choices that will stimulate your brain to re-wire and energize your life. The “C/see” must be first.