Habit 1: **Be Proactive** - *Take Responsibility for Your Life*

“Proactive People” vs. “Reactive People”

- Proactive people can say, “I am the force. I am the captain of my life. I can choose my attitude. I’m responsible for my own happiness or unhappiness. I am in the driver’s seat of my destiny, not just a passenger.” Proactive people think before they act. They recognize they can’t control everything that happens to them, but they can control what they do about it.
- Reactive people make choices based on impulse. They are like a can of cola. If life shakes them up a bit, the pressure builds and they suddenly explode. Reactive people are those that simply go through life pretty passively, and then “react” when something happens (usually in “crisis” mode).

Listen to Your Language

- You can usually hear the difference between proactive and reactive people by the type of language they use. Reactive language usually sounds like this: “That’s me. That’s just the way I am.” What they’re really saying is, *I’m not responsible for the way I act. I can’t change. I was predetermined to be this way.* Notice that reactive language takes the power away from you and gives it to something or someone else.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reactive Language</th>
<th>Proactive Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’ll try</td>
<td>I’ll do it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s just the way I am</td>
<td>I can do better than that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s nothing I can do</td>
<td>Let’s look at all the options</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have to</td>
<td>I choose to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can’t</td>
<td>There’s gotta be a way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You ruined my day</td>
<td>I’m not going to let your bad mood rub off on me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides feeling like victims, reactive people:

- Are easily offended
- Blame others
- Get angry and say things they later regret
- Whine and complain
- Wait for things to happen to them
- Change only when they have to

**Proactive people are a different breed. Proactive people:**

- Are not easily offended
- Take responsibility for their choices
- Think before they act
- Bounce back when something bad happens
- Always find a way to make it happen
- Focus on things they can do something about, and don’t worry about things they can’t

Reflection

- I tend to be most reactive: (when and where?)
- I tend to be the most proactive: (when and where?)
- The difficult challenge in life I’m faced with right now is...
- I can face that challenge today and become a change agent by...
- I think my language is mostly: (proactive or reactive?)
- A phrase I use a lot that is proactive is…
- A phrase I use a lot that is reactive is…
- I can replace my reactive phrases with the following proactive phrases…
- Do something today that you have wanted to do but never dared. Leave your comfort zone and go for it. Raise your hand in class, join a team or club, say “good-morning” and “good-afternoon” to your teachers.
- The next time you receive a poor test grade, attend your teacher’s tutoring sessions.
- If you get in a fight with a parent or a friend, be the first to apologize.
- Use your tool of self-awareness right now by asking yourself, “What is my most unhealthy habit?” Make up your mind to do something about it.