

Resilience and Risk Reduction

Comprehensive Resilience Module

Social Dimension

“Active Constructive Responding”

Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force

Active Constructive Responding Overview

An important part of developing resilience is through strengthening relationships and building trust with other people.

- ❑ Most people have the idea:
 - We build the strength of our relationships during the bad times.
 - It's important during the good times to reinforce and share those positive experiences.
- ❑ Active listening aids development of a conversation.



The communication that we have with others in the good times builds a foundation for how deeply we trust and lean on them when times get tough.

Good communication is not just about talking, but listening as well.

Responding actively and constructively when someone tells you good news has very positive benefits to both the speaker and the listener.

It promotes greater satisfaction, intimacy, and trust. Both people feel understood, and that strengthens the bond between people.

Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force

Purpose

☐ You can strengthen relationships by responding actively and constructively to others' positive experiences.

- How you respond to someone's positive experience matters.
- Only one of the four styles leads to stronger relationships.



Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force

Purpose

□ How you respond to someone's positive experience matters

Active Constructive:

Expresses authentic interest
You help the other person to savor the experience
As a result, the person feels validated and understood.

ACTIVE

CONSTRUCTIVE



DESTRUCTIVE



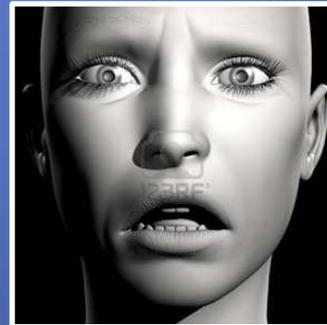
Active Destructive

It is overtly negative.
You bring the conversation to a halt.
As a result the other person might feel ashamed, embarrassed, guilty or even angry.

Passive Constructive:

You want to be supportive
You are quiet, providing understated support
You might be distracted—watching TV or checking your Blackberry.
The conversation eventually fizzles out.
As a result the other person might feel unimportant, misunderstood, embarrassed, and guilty.

PASSIVE



Passive Destructive

You ignore the event, a conversation never even starts.
As a result, the other person might feel confused, guilty or disappointed.

□ Only Active Constructive Responding leads to stronger relationships

Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force

Example of 4 Styles of Responding

Active Constructive Responding

Williams: "Hey, we won the baseball game!"

Jones: "That's great. What was the score?"

Williams: "5, nothing."

Jones: "that's awesome, man!"

Williams: "We're finally getting better. It was a little rough at first..."

Jones: "When's your next game?"

Williams: "Next Sunday"

Jones: "I'll be there!"

Williams: "Cool..."

Passive Destructive Responding

Williams: "Hey, we won the baseball game!"

Jones: "I got such a funny email from my son. Listen to this..."

Williams: "oh, cool... um... actually, hang on a sec... did you hear what I just said?"

Passive Constructive Responding

Williams: "Hey, we won the baseball game!"

Jones: "That's Nice."

Williams: "yeah... well... ok, um... see you later..."

Jones: "See you later..."

Active Destructive Responding

Williams: "Hey, we won the baseball game!"

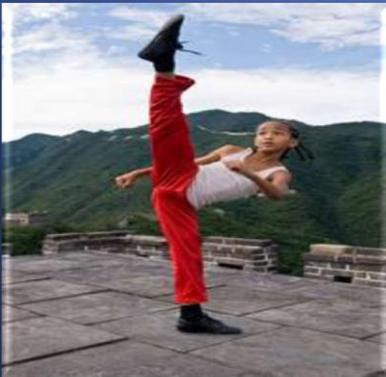
Jones: "Yeah, but you would be pretty sorry if you lost... that other team hasn't won a game yet. Besides, I think that league is a waste of time..."

Williams: "Thanks for the encouragement man, I really appreciate it... geez..."

Activity I

See if you can identify what type of responding is going on in these situations. Place the situation with its corresponding response style.

“Mom / Dad, look what I learned today!”



- "That's nice honey."
- "You need to practice more. You almost fell over three times."
- "Could you move? I can't see the TV."
- "That is very good! What is your favorite part of the activity?"

Activity II

- ❑ **A Soldier just got a pass for some rest and relaxation. Listen to each conversation. Then determine what style of responding you think it is, and list the characteristics that you notice in each conversation that leads you to choose that style.**

Conversation One

A: Hey I got chosen to go to Qatar next week.

B: Oh yeah, that's good.

A: Yeah, I'm really excited about it.

B: Hey, I've got to go, the DFAC is about to close.

I'll see you later...

A: OK, see ya.

Conversation Two

A: Hey I got chosen to go to Qatar next week.

B: A Fobbit? I've seen more action than you! I should have gotten one of those months ago. What's up with that?

A: I don't know... sorry...

B: Whatever, have fun?

A: Yeah, I'll try... thanks for the enthusiasm...

Conversation Three

A: Hey I got chosen to go to Qatar next week.

B: Hooah, when did you find out?

A: Just now, my platoon sergeant just told me.

B: What are you going to do with your time?

A: Man, I'm going to sleep, relax, chill and eat!

B: Hooah, you deserve it!

Conversation Four

A: Hey I got chosen to go to Qatar next week.

B: Excuse me, can you please hand me the paper on the printer?

A: Sure... here. Yeah, I'm really excited about it.

B: About what? Man, I'm sick of all this dust.

A: Never mind.

So What?

☐ Active Constructive Responding is:



Not about spending thirty minutes chatting about some good thing



It's about building strong relationships and trust

Thinking that the other person doesn't really care about you weakens your relationship



It's about asking questions – to help a person reap a positive experience



Soldiers rely on strong relationships to build confidence, effectiveness, and resilience

We can recognize what is effective and what is not and control our decisions as to how we respond

Activity III

- **Answer these Questions**
- Why should we care about how we respond and how it makes others feel?
- When is it difficult to choose Active Constructive Responding style?
- When did someone use a style other than Active Constructive with you in the past? How did it make you feel? Did it change how you viewed yourself or your abilities?
- What have you tried that seems to help you respond more actively or constructively?



Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force

Take Away

- ❑ We all have to work at using Active Constructive responses when people share positive experiences with us.
- ❑ Being active and constructive will strengthen our relationships.



Supporting a Resilient and Ready Force