

LESSON FIVE: ATTEMPTS THAT DON'T WORK

We continue to discuss some ineffective ways we deal with our button-pushers

THREATENING WITH NO FOLLOW-UP

Threats include anything from emotional distancing to removing privileges to leaving. We assume that the shock value will get through to our button-pusher. Inconsistent threats train your button-pusher to ignore you. He or she learns to let you blow off steam and doesn't feel the need to change. So, if you bark, be prepared to bite.

ONE TIME SHOULD DO IT

You hope and expect that one appeal, confrontation, invitation, threat, or consequence, should be enough. If it doesn't work, then you get discouraged and resign yourself to the bad situation. It simply isn't realistic or effective to think that only one talk will make the difference. It is better to look at change and growth as things that happen over a process of time, and not as an event.

OUR OWN DENIAL

You may be in denial about the nature and gravity of the situation. Denial distorts reality. We shift our perception of a painful situation as not "that" bad. Negative realities do not vanish when we avoid them. They often get worse.

WAITING FOR PERMISSION

Your plan is to wait politely until the button-pusher is ready and open to being helped, and then you will speak up. Unfortunately, the last thing a difficult person wants to do is to ask someone to help him change. The more silence there is, the more your button-pusher assumes all is well.

SPIRITUALIZING

This term refers to using spiritual concepts to defend against some negative reality.

There are three major spiritualizations people do with their button-pusher. The first is preaching. Here they repeatedly and ineffectively try to motivate that difficult person by telling them the Bible verses. If a person is not open or responding, it is sometimes wiser to, instead of preaching the Word, actually live the Word.

The second is when people withdraw from doing anything to solve the problem and simply pray and hope. We are co-laborers with Christ. Listen for what God may show you to do with your button-pusher in addition to prayer.

The third, and most destructive, spiritualization is superiority. The danger here is that this attitude is rooted in pride and not spiritual at all.

Spiritual people are on their faces before God asking him to help them daily. They are contrite and grateful to Him. They do not see themselves as above or below anyone, rather, they are more concerned with connecting to God and people in good, healthy, and growing ways.

So, get rid of spiritualizing and ask God to make you spiritual. You stand a much better chance of being a change agent for your button-pusher.