

# DO Therapy

## Practicing a New Response

We all have responses that have become familiar. We defend. Withdraw. Fix. Avoid. Agree. Take over. Shut down. Explain. React.

Sometimes those responses work. Sometimes they don't.

This exercise isn't about getting rid of who you are. It's about practicing **another response** so you have more than one option available.

## NOTICE

Start by identifying something you do automatically.

Think about a situation that regularly produces a familiar response.

- **When this happens...**
- **I usually...**

What happens quickly? What feels automatic? What do you tend to say or do before you've really thought about it?

Maybe you:

- |            |             |              |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| • Defend   | • Apologize | • Reassure   |
| • Withdraw | • Criticize | • Get louder |
| • Fix      | • Explain   | • Go quiet   |
| • Agree    | • Take over |              |
| • Avoid    | • Shut down |              |

## What does my usual response help me do?

- |                             |                              |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Maybe it reduces anxiety. | • Keeps someone happy.       | • Creates distance.    |
| • Ends the conversation.    | • Helps you feel in control. | • Gets something done. |
| • Protects you.             | • Avoids rejection.          |                        |

Your response probably exists for a reason. Now ask: **Is it still helping me get the outcome I want?**

## REVIEW THE GAME TAPE

Think about a recent time the pattern happened. Slow it down.

- |                                     |                                       |                                          |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| • <b>What happened?</b>             | • <b>What did I do automatically?</b> | • <b>What did my response help with?</b> |
| • <b>What did I notice or feel?</b> | • <b>What happened next?</b>          | • <b>What did it cost me?</b>            |

Now look for the moment where another response might have been possible. Not necessarily a perfect response. Just **different**. **What else could I have done?** If you're stuck, make the difference smaller.

Could you have:

- Paused?
- Asked a question?
- Used fewer words?
- Stayed a little longer?
- Left a little sooner?
- Asked directly?
- Listened before responding?
- Said what you actually felt?
- Waited before fixing?
- Allowed someone else to handle it?

**What might have happened if I tried that?** You don't know. That's why we're going to test it.

## **PRACTICE**

Choose **one different response**. Not five. One.

### **OLD RESPONSE**

- When
- I usually

### **DO DIFFERENT**

- Next time, I will try:

Make it specific enough that you can actually do it.

Instead of: "**Communicate better.**"

- Try: "**Ask one question before I defend myself.**"

Instead of: "**Stop people-pleasing.**"

- Try: "**Say, 'Let me think about it,' before agreeing.**"

Instead of: "**Be more vulnerable.**"

- Try: "**Say what I'm actually feeling once.**"

Instead of: "**Stop fixing.**"

- Try: "**Ask whether they want listening or problem-solving.**"

Now expect something important: **IT MAY FEEL WEIRD.**

You may feel awkward. Slow. Scripted. Uncertain. Uncomfortable. That's information. It isn't automatically evidence that the new response is wrong.

After you try it, ask:

- **What happened?**
- **What felt awkward or unfamiliar?**
- **What worked?**
- **What didn't?**
- **What would I adjust next time?**

## BUILD REPS

One attempt isn't enough information. Your old response may have years of practice behind it. Give the new response a fair chance. Try it again. And again. Not because you have to force yourself to adopt it.

Because you need enough experience to learn whether it is useful.

### REP 1

- What I tried:
- What happened:

### REP 2

- What I tried:
- What happened:

### REP 3

- What I tried:
- What happened:

### REP 4

- What I tried:
- What happened:

Now notice:

- **Is the response becoming easier?**
- **Does it still feel scripted?**
- **Am I getting a different outcome?**
- **Do I want to keep it, adjust it, or try something else?**

Remember: The goal isn't to force a new behavior until it becomes automatic. The goal is to **test whether another response deserves a place in your playbook.**

## KEEP THIS IN MIND

Different doesn't automatically mean better. And uncomfortable doesn't automatically mean wrong. You're experimenting. Sometimes you'll discover: **"That worked better."** Sometimes: **"That wasn't quite right, but part of it helped."** Sometimes: **"I need another option."** And sometimes: **"My original response actually made sense here."**

That's useful information too. The goal isn't to replace every familiar response. It's to increase your **range**. Instead of: **TRIGGER → AUTOMATIC RESPONSE** you're practicing: **TRIGGER → NOTICE → CHOICE → RESPONSE**

The more responses you practice, the more options you have.

## TEST & LEARN

Pick one familiar pattern. **Notice it.** Review what usually happens. **Review the game tape.** Choose one small alternative. **Do different.** See what happens. **Learn.** Adjust it.

**Build reps.** Over time, what once felt awkward may become another response you can access when you need it. **Notice → Review the Game Tape → Practice → Build Reps**

**Don't just decide whether different feels right. Test whether different works.**