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Introduction

How we say things makes a big difference in the response we get. Psychology literature says we're not responsible for another person's reactions and that nobody can cause us to react or feel a certain way.

Yes and no:

1. **Yes, we must take control of and responsibility for our own emotions and behavior.**

    - We all have hot buttons and soft spots that make us more likely to react to certain things. **The good news is we can learn how to control those reactions - or at least regulate them.**

    - We may know of people and issues that can easily cause a negative or over-the-top reaction. Having that awareness, we can think ahead about how we want to respond and come up with something that works better than when we are caught off guard.

2. **No - or not completely.**

- Some people are jerks, or trolls in the online vernacular. There's no avoiding that fact. They may try to provoke a reaction by saying and doing things that they know will send people into orbit.

- If we can learn to change our reactions, they may stop. Why continue if it isn't working anymore?

- You may have heard the saying, "They know how to push my buttons because they installed them." This is about patterns of behavior and interactions that bring up an automatic, knee-jerk reaction.

- It happens before we have a chance to think about it, take a deep breath, or count to ten. In those situations, **with awareness, preparation and practice, we may be able to stop or turn down the reaction.**

Sometimes people push our buttons intentionally, but most are acting without thinking. The dance between certain people happens outside conscious thought - old patterns that repeat themselves.

You may have more control than you realize! Consider the ideas in this report - they're not your typical communication skills training.