

Slide 1

Getting It Right Without The  
Righting Reflex



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Slide 2

The Righting Reflex



1. What it is
2. How it gets in the way
3. Recognizing and replacing it
4. Practice and tips

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Slide 3

How Would You Respond?



Jason Headley, (2013, May 22), It's Not About The Nail. (video file)  
Retrieved from <https://youtu.be/4E9ndAhQa>

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Slide 4

The Righting Reflex



- I know what could fix this...
- If I could just convince them of...
- Let me tell you what to do...

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Slide 5

Motivation?



"People don't resist change.  
They resist **being** changed."

Peter Senge, MIT based author, researcher and educator

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Slide 6

Activity #1: Reactions



- They interrupt
- They tune out
- They stop coming back

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Slide 7

Replacing the Righting Reflex

- R:** Resist the righting reflex
- U:** Understand the client's perspective
- L:** Listen with acceptance and reflect
- E:** Empower the client by affirming autonomy

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Activity #2: **R-U-L-E** (Resisting & Understanding)

1. Read statement.
  - a. What would the helper say if they were trying to fix, or correct the situation?
  - b. What would the helper say if they resisted the righting reflex and chose to understand the person's perspective?

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Activity Statements

1. "I don't know that I am ready to have a job interview right now. I think it would be better to wait until I have more experience."
2. "I'm not sure employers want my skills. I have been applying for the past six months and it feels like I am getting nowhere."
3. "I want to change my career, but I am not sure this is the right time for me."
4. "It would be nice to have a better paying job, but I have to go back to school and that could take months."
5. "I have been doing this type of work for so long. A change seems impossible."

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Getting Accurate Understanding



1. Being curious:
  - Tell me more about...
  - What makes that important to you...
2. Help the individual find meaning...
  - The bottom line for you is...

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Listen and Reflect

Take a guess about what you think the person is thinking and/or feeling

- "So, what you're saying is..."
- "It sounds like..."
- "You're feeling..."
- "You're hoping..."
- "And you're wondering if..."
- "You..."

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Unlock the Meaning

"I have been thinking about going back to school and getting my high school diploma, but that seems like a lot of work. I can barely manage to meet my responsibilities now."

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Slide 13

One Way To Respond...

"You're feeling overwhelmed by your current responsibilities and hoping that you will be able to keep up."

**Affective reflection:** reflects what you think the person feels



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Slide 14

Activity # 3: R - U - L - E (Listening)

1. Pick a statement.
  - a. What could you reflect back to the person that shows you have listened and heard the person's perspective? (Without judgement)



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Slide 15

Activity# 3 Statements

1. "I don't know that I am ready to have a job interview right now. I think it would be better to wait until I have more experience."
2. "I'm not sure employers want my skills. I have been applying for the past six months and it feels like I am getting nowhere."
3. "I want to change my career, but I am not sure this is the right time for me."
4. "It would be nice to have a better paying job, but I have to go back to school and that could take months."
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Slide 16

Empowering Person

"I have been thinking about going back to school and getting my high school diploma, but that seems like a lot of work. I can barely manage to meet my responsibilities now."

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Autonomy and Affirmation

You are taking time to think about your choices in the future.

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Activity#4: R- U- L - E (Empower)

1. Refer to same statement.
- a. How will you emphasize the person's autonomy and/or affirm strengths, effort or traits?

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**Activity# 4 Statements**

1. "I don't know that I am ready to have a job interview right now. I think it would be better to wait until I have more experience."
2. "I'm not sure employers want my skills. I have been applying for the past six months and it feels like I am getting nowhere."
3. "I want to change my career, but I am not sure this is the right time for me."
4. "It would be nice to have a better paying job, but I have to go back to school and that could take months."
5. "I have been doing this type of work for so long. A change seems impossible."



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Slide 20


**Tips for Giving Information**

Before giving information or advice:

- Ask for the person's ideas
- Ask permission
- Ask what the person thinks about what you shared

If you are fixing and the person reacts:

- Apologize and re-engage
- Reflect perspective and get accurate understanding



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**Reference**

Miller, W. & Rollnick, S. (2013). Third Edition Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change. New York: The Guilford Press.

Client Language as a Mediator of Motivational Interviewing Efficacy: Where is the evidence? Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research Vol 31 No S3 October 2007

For research related to motivational interviewing, go to: Systematic and Meta-Analyses of Research on Motivational Interviewing Updated 7/12/17 at [http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/sites/default/files/mi\\_research\\_reviews\\_2017.pdf](http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/sites/default/files/mi_research_reviews_2017.pdf)



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