



# Reflex Thinking

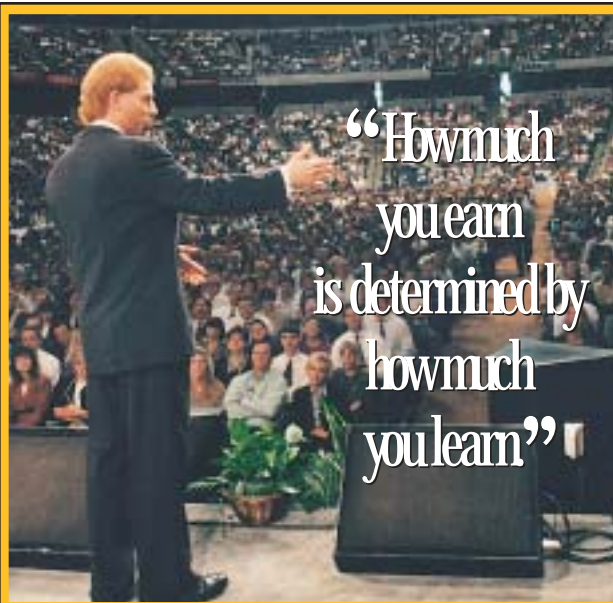
## Responding or Reacting - Which is your knee-jerk reaction?

**W** “What lies behind you and what lies before you pale in significance when compared to what lies within you.”  
—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Yes, I know that your past is important, but as important as it is, according to Dr. Tony Campolo, it is not nearly as important to your present as the way you see your future. Ralph Waldo Emerson was right when he said that what lies behind you and what lies before you pale in significance when compared to what lies within you. This is especially true when you learn to respond and NOT react to life’s daily challenges.

It’s been said before and it will be said again: You cannot change the past, but your future is spotless. You can write on it what you will. In order to do so, however, you need to learn to respond to the positive and the negative. Fortunately, you have far more control than you realize. For example, all of us have on occasion been guilty of saying, “He/She makes me so mad!” That simply is not so. As a wise man said, you can’t stir the soup unless there’s some soup in the pot to stir. Nobody can make you act mad unless there is already some mad in you. Mad reactions are learned behaviors and consequently they can be unlearned. You can watch a person go about his or her daily activities for days or weeks and learn a great deal about him. However, you can watch a person under adverse circumstances for five minutes and see whether he has learned to respond or react. Actually, you can learn more about him in minutes under trying conditions than you can in days of just watching him involved in daily activities.

BY ZIG ZIGLAR



“How much  
you earn  
is determined by  
how much  
you learn”

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- December 14 ....Greenville, South Carolina


### Clear & 20/20

Have you ever been heading for work, driving along, minding your own business, your mind “in neutral,” when suddenly somebody cuts sharply in front of you at an exit? You manage to avoid him by hitting your brakes full force while at the same time sounding your horn, shaking your fist at the offender, and even yelling, “You dummy! Why don't you watch what you're doing? I could've been killed and so could you!” Have you ever gotten upset about an incident like that and taken your anger to work, where you proceeded to tell everybody in earshot about this idiot who pulled in front of you and almost killed you? Did you wonder out loud why they allow people like that to get licenses? How could anybody have made such an idiotic mistake? And you go on and on as you describe in angry terms the idiot who almost killed you. “They ought to keep people like him off the streets!” you declare with righteous indignation. In the meantime, the man who committed the dastardly deed rides merrily on, completely oblivious of the fact that you even exist or that anything unusual has happened. And yet, he is in complete control of your life. He is in charge of your mind and your emotions. He is affecting your productivity, your relationships with others, even your very future, and (once more) he doesn't even know you exist! One of our

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greatest gifts from God is the ability to choose the way we think, act, or feel, and the ultimate personal put-down is when we permit someone like the above-mentioned driver to take charge of our lives and our attitudes.

### Do You Respond Or React?

I've been beating the bushes a long time, but I seldom hear anyone make a habit of blaming someone else for his success. He doesn't say, “It's all my manager's fault. He/She spent a lot of extra time with me and made me study, drill, and prepare. He's/She's the reason I'm successful today.” Most of the time we don't even say, “It was my spouse's or parents' fault. They kept after me night and day until I did what was necessary, and that's the reason I've been successful.” No, most of us have a tendency to blame somebody else for our difficulties, but keep appropriate credit for our success to ourselves. What about you? Do you respond to the negative and make it better, or do you react to the negative and make it worse? Learn to be a Top Performer by making the proper choices. 

Zig Ziglar is one of the most sought-after motivational speakers in the country and a best-selling author. Reprinted with permission of *The Christian Businessman* magazine. For subscription info, call toll-free (888)775-6175.