

You Could Be Walking Into A Dangerous Trap!



Have you ever heard the “count to 10, breath and then decide” rule? Well, according to Les Parrott, PhD, in his book *3 Seconds: The Power of Thinking Twice*, it takes even less time to avoid doing or not doing something we might regret. I believe it is about more than just waiting an appropriate amount of time. It comes down to pausing and using the appropriate amount of leadership. I got to experience a few levels of leadership and thinking yesterday during the Waterloo Bus Crisis.

I am dubbing it that because for many of us parents it felt like an unstable situation of extreme danger and certainly extreme emotion. It started with a message that the busses were running 15 to 20 minutes late. When you take into account that it was the first day of school and assume they are taking great care to ensure each student gets on the right bus, it seems like a very reasonable delay.

What started out as a jovial meeting of parents eagerly awaiting to hear the details of the first day of school from their cherished little ones, quickly became a lynch mob planning the tar and feathers. I will spare you the details other than some of us got our precious package at the appointed stop about an hour and a half later than planned and some of us didn't. Some parents actually tracked the bus down in the neighborhood to retrieve their kids.

To further the frustration and worry, we realized that our kids had been sitting on the bus for 2 hours. This is a bus with no bathroom and no air

conditioning. So imagine if you will, about 50 sweaty, hungry, tired and anxious little monkeys all stuffed in a tin can left out in the sun. Not a pretty sight. The reunions looked like those of a hostage situation being returned to their loved ones, minus the long beards and tattered clothing.

During that time of waiting, I saw people reacting vs. responding. One parent was calling the police, while another was on hold with a local news station. Both reactions seemed to be a little extreme to me. I chose to call the bus barn and get details. I chose to remain calm. Admittedly angry, but calm. I choose to take the action of finding out facts today and to understand what plan is in place to ensure the same thing doesn't happen today.

Now that things have calmed down, I can't help but wonder what the individuals that reacted so quickly are thinking right now. I can tell you from the view of someone that made the conscious decision to respond instead, I am not sure I would trust those individuals with my children any more than I want to put them back on that bus today. On top of that, image what it would have looked like if the news crew had shown up and captured those reactions on video. Is that the image those parents want to hold for their children? Is that the way they want to be perceived at their place of business?

In this age of social media, I believe you are walking into a very dangerous trap if you don't slow down and exercise deliberate leadership. So I encourage you to think about what areas of your life you are simply reacting to. How can you change that to a response that you will be proud of in the morning?

“Human freedom involves our capacity to pause, to choose the one response toward which we wish to throw our weight.” – Rollo May