

Radical Openness Handout 16.1

Identifying “Pushbacks” and “Don’t Hurt Me” Responses

Both “pushback” and “don’t hurt me” responses...

- *Represent hidden intentions or disguised demands* that negatively impact relationships
- *Function to block unwanted feedback* or requests to join with others; they are nonengagement signals
- *Function to secretly control others*, yet the indirect manner in which they are expressed makes it plausible for the sender to deny this
- *Function to allow one to avoid taking responsibility* for how one may have contributed to a problem or difficulty by implying that the fault lies with the other person or elsewhere
- *Are experienced as aversive* or punishing by those on the receiving end
- A “don’t hurt me” response contains two disguised social signals:
 1. *You don’t understand me.*
 2. *You are hurting me.*
- “Don’t hurt me” responses are **signaled nonverbally** via pouting, sulking, moping, pursed lips, frowning, head down, hiding face, downcast eyes, brooding, sighing, whining, whimpering, moaning, beseeching, and begging.
- Despite their apparently compliant or submissive nature, “don’t hurt me” responses **function to covertly control the behavior of others**, most often by blocking unwanted feedback and/or by disrupting requests for change.
- They are extremely effective because they function to **elicit caregiving responses from the tribe rather than confrontation**—for example, desires to soothe, help, or apologetically reassure.
- Their secret or covert nature makes it difficult for someone to challenge their authenticity.
- Most people tend to avoid individuals who habitually use “don’t hurt me” responses (for example, walking on eggshells whenever around them, for fear of upsetting them) **and/or may perceive them as incompetent, unwell, or fragile.**
- A “pushback” response contains two disguised social signals:
 1. *I’m not telling you what to do.*
 2. *But you’d better do what I want.*

- **“Pushback” responses are signaled nonverbally** via flat and stony facial expressions, the silent treatment; scowling; hostile stares; walking away; contemptuous expressions; eye rolls; disgust reactions; cold, sharp, sarcastic, patronizing, and monotonic voice tones; callous smiles, burglar smiles; dismissive gestures; sneering, snickering, mockery, scornful giggling, laughing disdainfully.
- **“Pushback” responses are likely to elicit “pushback” responses from the recipient.** Most people don’t like being pushed, and the most common reaction is retaliation or hostility, triggering “pushback” wars or feuds. The end result can be a severely damaged relationship. Ask yourself: *Is this the type of reaction I want to elicit?*
- **“Pushbacks” are social dominance signals stemming from Fixed Mind thinking.** They function to control others and/or block unwanted feedback, without the sender having to take responsibility for doing so. They are designed to elicit compliance, capitulation, submission, obedience, and/or apologies from others.
- **Most people tend to avoid individuals who frequently use “pushback” responses to get what they want because they fear reprisal** (for example, they may walk on eggshells in order to avoid annoying, upsetting, or appearing to oppose them).

Describe other social signaling habits that you have developed over the years.

Radical Openness Handout 16.2

Using Self-Enquiry to Explore “Pushback” and “Don’t Hurt Me” Behaviors

- **Remember, self-enquiry involves a willingness to question ourselves when we feel threatened or challenged** rather than automatically defending ourselves.
- **It means finding a good question, in order to learn,** and then allowing an answer (if there is one) to be self-discovered by the practitioner. This is why self-enquiry practices should be expected to last over days or weeks.
- **It begins by asking: *What is it that I might need to learn [from this painful experience]?***
- **Remember to keep your practices short and to be suspicious of quick answers.** Record what emerges from your practice in your self-enquiry journal. Use the following questions to help guide your practice.
 - *To what extent am I proud of the way I am behaving? Would I encourage another person or a young child to behave similarly when they interact with me? What might this tell me about my values and/or how I feel about the way I am behaving or thinking? What is it that I might need to learn?*
 - *If I am proud of how I am behaving or thinking, then what is preventing me from more openly revealing my true intentions to the other person or persons?*
 - *Would I feel embarrassed, distressed, or annoyed if my intentions or desires were to be revealed to others or made public?*
 - *To what extent do I engage in “don’t hurt me” responses? How and when do they show up?*
 - *To what extent do I engage in “pushback” responses? How and when do they show up?*
 - *Have I ever purposefully used a “don’t hurt me” response to get someone to do what I wanted or stop them from doing something I didn’t want? What might this tell me about my style of social signaling?*
 - *Have I ever purposefully used a “pushback” response to get someone to do what I wanted or stop them from doing something I didn’t want? What might this tell me about myself?*
 - *Is a “don’t hurt me” social signal more vague and ambiguous OR more candid and up-front? Is a “pushback” social signal direct and forthright OR evasive and indirect? Which type of social signaling do I prefer or value? What might this tell me about my values or my style of social signaling?*
 - *What am I trying to say to others when I engage in a “don’t hurt me” response? What prevents me from being more direct?*
 - *What am I trying to say to others when I engage in a “pushback” response? What prevents me from being more open and direct about my intentions?*

- *What type of message does a “don’t hurt me” response send to others? Does a “don’t hurt me” signal competence or incompetence to another person? How confident would I feel about flying with an airline captain who signaled a “don’t hurt me” response just before takeoff? Or putting myself in the hands of a surgeon who signaled a “don’t hurt me” response just before performing heart surgery? What might this tell me about how “don’t hurt me” responses impact relationships?*
- *What type of message does a “pushback” response send to others? How does it feel when another person uses a “pushback” on me? Is it a pleasurable experience? Do I feel warmhearted toward them? Do I want to spend more time with them? Does it lead to greater trust between us? What might this tell me about how pushbacks impact relationships?*
- *If a person frequently engages in “don’t hurt me” behaviors—for example, head down, shoulders slumped, eyes downcast, dejected facial expressions—what type of message are they sending to themselves? How might this impact their sense of well-being?*
- *How might habitual use of “pushback” responses impact a person’s sense of self or their emotional well-being?*
- *How do I feel when another person engages in a “don’t hurt me” response around me? Do I like it? Do I feel sorry for them? Do I ever feel manipulated?*
- *How might “don’t hurt me” responses impact relationships?*
- *What are the advantages of “don’t hurt me” responses? What do I fear might happen if I stopped engaging in “don’t hurt me” behaviors? Is there something here for me to learn?*
- *How do I feel when another person engages in a “pushback” response around me? Do I like it? Do I feel bullied or belittled? Do I ever feel manipulated?*
- *How might “pushback” responses impact relationships?*
- *What are the advantages of “pushback” responses? What do I fear might happen if I stopped engaging in “pushback” behaviors? Is there something here for me to learn?*
- *To what extent am I resisting, avoiding, or disliking self-enquiry about “don’t hurt me” and “pushback” responses? Does my resistance signal that there is something important for me to acknowledge or recognize about myself?*
- *What might my resistance say to me if it could speak? Is it possible that I am numbing out or shutting down in order to avoid taking responsibility or make important changes in my life? What am I afraid might happen if I let my guard down? What is it that I might need to learn?*
- *What is it that I need to learn from how I communicate my needs, wants, and desires to others? To what extent am I willing to truly examine my social signaling behaviors? What might this tell me?*
- *What am I trying to say or signal to others when I engage in a “pushback” or “don’t hurt me” response? What is preventing me from being more open and direct about my intentions, needs, or wants? What is it that I might need to learn?*
- *Where did I ever get the idea that being direct or open about one’s inner experience is wrong, inappropriate, ineffective, or dangerous?*
- *Is it possible that my automatic distrust or suspicion of others creates a self-fulfilling prophecy? What am I afraid of?*

- *To what extent do I expect others to treat me as special? What might this tell me about my social signaling?*
- *How often do I feel that my efforts or self-sacrifices go unrecognized by others? What prevents me from telling others about my disappointment or desires for appreciation? How might my lack of disclosure impact my personal well-being and my relationships with others? What is it that I might need to learn?*
- *To what extent do I believe others should know what I am thinking, wanting, or expecting to happen, without me having to tell them? How often do I assume that I have been direct with someone about what I wanted, only to find out later that the other person did not actually know what it was that I wanted? What might this tell me about my assumptions about the world? What might this tell me about my style of communication? Is there something to learn here?*

Other self-enquiry questions.

Radical Openness Handout 16.3

Main Points for Lesson 16: Interpersonal Integrity, Part 2

Flexible Mind REVEALS

1. There are two common OC disguised demands, referred to as “*pushback*” and “*don’t hurt me*” responses.
2. Both are disguised demands, or maladaptive social signals, that negatively impact relationships.
3. Both function to block unwanted feedback or requests to join with others; they are nonengagement signals.
4. Both function to control others, yet the indirect manner by which they are expressed makes it plausible for the sender to deny this.
5. Both function to avoid taking responsibility for how one may have contributed to a problem or difficulty by implying that the fault lies with the other person or elsewhere.
6. Both are experienced as aversive or punishing by those on the receiving end.
7. Use Flexible Mind REVEALS to let go of habitual “*pushback*” and “*don’t hurt me*” responses.

Radical Openness Worksheet 16.A

Flexible Mind REVEALS

Flexible Mind REVEALS

- R **Recognize** secret desires for control
- E **Examine** your social signaling and label what you find
- V Remember your core **Values**
- E **Engage** with integrity by outing yourself
- A Practice Flexible Mind **ADOPTS**
- L **Learn** through self-enquiry

R **Recognize** *secret desires for control.*

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Noticed times when I wanted to control a social interaction but did not want the other person to know about my secret intentions (for example, to influence, direct, stop, or change their behavior or the outcome of a social event).

Describe an example of a secret desire for control.

- Used self-enquiry to help identify times when I might want to hide my intentions from others or secretly control or manipulate the situation or behavior of others.

Record the self-enquiry question you found most helpful.

E Examine *your social signaling and label what you find.*

“Don’t Hurt Me” Responses

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Noticed desires to be treated as special.
- Noticed hidden beliefs that it is unfair for others to challenge, question, or criticize me without my approval, or unless it is delivered in just the right way.
- Recognized nonverbal signals linked to “don’t hurt me” responses: head hanging, shoulders slumped, lack of eye contact, sighing, tearfulness, pouting.

Write in the space provided how your “don’t hurt me” response was nonverbally signaled.

“Pushback” Responses

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Noticed secret desires to prove the other person wrong, sabotage their efforts, and/or dominate what is happening.
- Noticed times I felt offended by what I imagined to be an inappropriate challenge.
- Recognized times I strongly desired to correct or punish others for perceived wrongdoing.
- Recognized nonverbal signals linked to “pushback” responses: flat facial expression, intense stare, curling my lips, or rolling my eyes whenever the other person spoke; voice tone clipped, cold, or sarcastic.

Write in the space provided how your “pushback” response was nonverbally signaled.

V Remember your core Values.

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Used self-enquiry to identify my core values that conflict with desires to manipulate or control other people.

Write in the space provided the self-enquiry questions you found most helpful.

- Stopped pretending to myself that others didn't already know most or many of my secrets.
- Practiced living by my values by going opposite to my manipulative social signal.

When Signaling a "Don't Hurt Me"...

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Went opposite to desires to appear weak, submissive, or helpless by being direct, candid, and open.
- Went opposite to urges to hide my face or slump my shoulders by puffing out my chest, standing tall, sitting upright, and holding my head and chin high.
- Activated my social safety system.
- Remembered that I am competent (for example, recalled times when I made self-sacrifices or persisted in difficult tasks in order to help others or benefit society).

When Using a "Pushback"...

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Went opposite to desires to appear dominant, unflappable, or invulnerable by signaling vulnerability, openness, and humility.
- Activated my social safety system.
- Went opposite to urges to stand tall and stare them down by rounding my shoulders, using openhanded gestures, and/or raising my eyebrows with a slight smile when I spoke.
- Remembered my core values for fair-mindedness and truthfulness.

E Engage with integrity by outing yourself.

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Practiced outing myself rather than hiding my true intentions.
- Blocked attempts by the listener to reassure, validate, or soothe me when I outed myself.
- Disclosed my desire to either push back or signal a “don’t hurt me” to the person I was interacting with instead of keeping it secret.
- Practiced taking responsibility for my personal reactions by revealing them.
- Practiced noticing what happened when I was more forthcoming with people.
- Took responsibility for my emotional reactions rather than blaming them on others or expecting the world to change.
- Practiced being more direct and candid with people in general.
- Used Flexible Mind Is DEEP skills in order to link my open expression with my valued goals.
- Practiced revealing dislike or disagreement, without expecting the other person to change.
- Encouraged others to feel free to reveal their inner feelings or reactions when interacting with me.
- Practiced revealing my desires for the other person to be soothing, validating, or give me what I wanted.

A Practice Flexible Mind ADOPTS.

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Used handout 22.1 (Being Open to Feedback from Others: Flexible Mind ADOPTS) to enhance my receptivity to feedback.
- Used the twelve steps for evaluating feedback in Flexible Mind ADOPTS to determine whether to accept or decline feedback.

L Learn through self-enquiry.

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the skills you practiced.

- Remembered that self-enquiry involves a willingness to question my intentions, beliefs, or behavior, without falling apart.
- Used the questions in handout 16.2 (Using Self-Enquiry to Explore “Don’t Hurt Me” and “Pushback” Behaviors) to facilitate my self-enquiry practice.

Write in the space provided the self-enquiry questions you found most helpful.

Radical Openness Worksheet 16.B

Identifying Secret Desires for Control

Use the following examples to help identify secret desires for control.

Place a checkmark in the boxes next to the desires that you have or have had and have struggled to reveal or disclose to others directly.

- Desires for someone to stop giving you feedback (for example, criticism or praise) or expressing how they feel (for example, how angry they are with you)
- Desires to punish someone for not behaving according to your standards or for failing to complete a task in the manner or time frame you believe appropriate
- Desires for someone to help you and/or expectations that they should either already be helping or know when you need it
- Desires for someone to acknowledge how hard your life has been and as a consequence not push you to make needed changes or expect much from you
- Desires for the world or others to change in order to suit how you think things should be or enable you to get what you want
- Desires for the other person to be nice to you, soothing, or validating
- Desires to walk away or for another person to walk away or leave you alone
- Desires for someone to behave or think like you do
- Desires to get what you want, prove another wrong, and/or dominate a situation or another person
- Desires to sabotage the efforts of others in order to prove a point or win
- Desires to change the topic in order to avoid a potential conflict
- Desires for others to recognize your good intentions, acknowledge your hard work, and appreciate your self-sacrifices
- Desires for vengeance and/or to pay back another person for what you perceive to be wrongdoings and/or moral failings on their part