



## Response Vs. Reaction, by Adyashanti

When I was 19 and 20, part of what drove my urge to awaken was that we were still in the midst of the Cold War, and it looked as though we might imminently drop bombs on each other. I saw the insanity and violence, and it occurred to me that we were all waiting for someone to solve this problem for us -- waiting for our politics to change, for our leaders to change, for some grand leader to inspire us. And somehow I just intuitively sensed that there must be a change of perspective, something much more radical inside. This mantra came to my mind, and it fed my awakening: "If not me, then who? If not now, then when?" And this brought all of the energy back to me. I started to see, from the standpoint of oneness, that when we look at the world around us and our leaders, it's important to see them as our own self. And that can be shocking. If it's all one, then the leaders we don't like are our own self, our shadow side, which society is denying. Instead of owning these forces of division and violence within ourselves, we project them onto somebody else. We get angry. It's sort of a noble anger, a noble hatred, a noble division, and it's easy to justify. "I am right because I'm a peace activist or an environmental activist." We miss that this anger, no matter how justified, is still inside the movement of division--and it's only contributing to division. If the cause is wholeness or the cause is peace, then the cause is good--but the ends do not justify the means. Hate is hate; it doesn't matter why we hate. Anger is anger; it doesn't really matter why you're dividing yourself against somebody. In the universe, it registers as division. When we start to see that, we can see that we are not justified in our divisions. If we are harboring division, we are violent, and that violence will manifest sooner or later. It's sobering to see this, but when you do, it takes away the justification for being divided. That's what I started to see at a young age. My concern drove me to a deeper place, this place that we're called to when we speak of spiritual awakening. Now from that place, we can have a very active response to the world rather than a reaction against it. A response is inherently positive; a reaction is inherently negative and divisive. A great thing about coming to our own wholeness is that it's not as though we just sit on our couch and see that everything is perfect. We do see that everything is perfect--but from that sense of perfection arise great love, great compassion, and a great response to the life around us. It's a response that is undivided. As a whole, as a world culture, if there is going to be a salvation, it's going to have to come from the human heart being undivided. And to get there, we all have to wake up.

--Adyashanti, in Quiet Revolution [1]

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