

Active Constructive Responding (ACR)

Active Constructive Responding (ACR) is a skill that helps you genuinely react to someone else's good news. The goal of ACR is to share in their joy and help them leave the conversation as—or even more—excited. That's why someone who practices ACR is referred to as an "Excitement Magnifier."

Use ACR to build trust, connection, intimacy, and satisfaction in your relationships with your battle buddies, spouse, kids, leaders, or someone you lead.

Constructive | Active
**EXCITEMENT
MAGNIFIER**

Provides authentic, enthusiastic support
Asks thoughtful questions that encourage the person to share more details about their experience
Tends to match and build up the sharer's excitement

"Wow! That's great! What did you say when you found out? What are you most looking forward to?"

Constructive | Passive
**EXCITEMENT
EXTINGUISHER**

Downplays support
Seems distracted and quiet while offering delayed support in a low-energy manner
Tends to stifle the sharer's excitement as the conversation deteriorates

"Good for you..."
(while distractedly staring at cell phone)

Destructive | Active
**PROBLEM
DETECTOR**

Bad-mouths the event
Focuses on any negative aspects
Tends to be dismissive, demeaning, or anxious about the event, which leads to squashing the sharer's excitement

"That sounds like a bad idea. Won't that be annoying?"

Destructive | Passive
ONE-UPPER

Ignores the shared news
Shifts the focus to a different topic
Tends to avoid the conversation and stifles the sharer's excitement

"Before we talk about you...let me tell you about me. My situation is so much better!"

Active Constructive Responding (ACR) Worksheet

Instructions:

1. List the important people in your life.
2. Write down the percentage of time you respond to their good news in a specific style.
3. Explain what prevents you from applying ACR.
4. Jot down strategies you can use to better show support.

Sample entry below: When my spouse shares good news, I tend to be an *Excitement Extinguisher* 10% of the time, a *One-Upper* 5% of the time, a *Problem Detector* 55% of the time, and an *Excitement Magnifier* 30% of the time. It's hard to apply ACR when I'm stressed at work, but I can try to learn more about their excitement.

Important people	Excitement Extinguisher <i>Provides understated support</i>	One-Upper <i>Changes focus</i>	Problem Detector <i>Squashes joy</i>	Excitement Magnifier <i>Shares joy</i>
Spouse	10%	5%	55%	30%

What gets in the way of my reaction to good news?

Work stress

How can I better apply ACR?

Try to learn more about what makes others so excited
