

Pondering Point

We have all been on the giving or receiving end of silent treatment. *Why do we do it?* It is a form of ostracism. *What message are we sending when we intend to ignore someone?* We think we're punishing the other person and they may not be aware of it (or even care). In actuality, we are hurting ourselves. When we choose not to resolve a conflict, we choose to carry around the pain and anger. This weighs on our bodies and can affect future relationships. **It is our ethical responsibility to communicate our feelings and not intentionally use the cold shoulder as punishment.** *Are we willing to pay for the damages we are creating?*

The silent treatment is not always intentional. In conflict, we may find ourselves in need of a 'time-out'. A chance to step back and cool off from the situation in an attempt to gain perspective and wrangle our emotions. We need to remember to step forward again and be assertive with our communication. When the 'time-out' goes on too long, it can be construed as the cold shoulder. No one likes to be ignored. Treatment is intentional. **When does being silent turn into a 'treatment'?** *What may be keeping us from confronting our emotions verbally? What suffers when adults engage in this behavior?*

Do you intentionally give the SILENT TREATMENT?

*What are you saying by not saying a thing?
What does that get us?*



Imagine... finding the midpoint between a hot temper and a cold shoulder.

— From Pondering to Practice —

Activity:

- Lead a group discussion about the following:
- How do you feel when others give you the silent treatment?
 - Did you ever confront the person?
 - Were they intending to give you the brush off?
 - How did it make you feel?
 - Is it a different feeling when it happens at home, at work or with people we are closer to?
 - Knowing how that made you feel, what can you do to avoid putting others through this?

Reflection:

- When you give the silent treatment:
- *Is it because you are too scared to speak up?*
 - *Are you trying to punish someone?*
 - *Are you trying to process what happened?*
- Can you see how giving someone the silent treatment may be giving them the wrong message?*
- *What can you do to make your message come across clearly?*
 - *Did you get accomplish your goal by being silent?*

"Conflicts are never resolved in silence."
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.