

Dick Maggione: Our ability to respond an important responsibility

By [Dick Maggione Special](#) to The Canton Repository

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Terrell Owens, the former NFL All-Pro receiver, unprecedentedly is passing on attending his Pro Football Hall of Fame induction ceremony in Canton.

David Baker, president & CEO of the Pro Football Hall of Fame, said, “We are disappointed but will respect Terrell’s decision not to participate in the enshrinement.”

Baker took the high road in responding and focused on the Hall’s five core values: commitment, integrity, courage, respect and excellence.

Athletes, Hall of Fame executives, people in business — all of us — daily face situations in which a response is necessary. How we handle those responses is important. It reminds us of a quote from noted pastor Charles R. Swindoll: “Life is 10 percent what happens to you and 90 percent how you react to it.”

Responsibility is response-ability, our ability to respond effectively and appropriately.

What does response-ability have to do with business or [marketing](#)? The answer is everything.

For clues about business response-ability, we can look again to Baker.

We are impressed with Baker’s response to Owens. It’s one thing to talk about it, but quite another to walk the walk. It is representative of the greater Canton community. We honor the heroes of the game, preserve its history, promote its values and celebrate excellence everywhere.

Owens also had a response. We don’t know what was in his head or heart, but we respect his decision. We’re hopeful he will one day come to Canton, where he will be greeted with open arms.

Responsibility, in terms of our ability to respond, also was addressed by American philosopher and speaker Wayne Dyer: “How people treat you is their karma; how you react is yours.”

Dyer’s comment has resonated with me. We all have private lives, our family life, work or business lives, our social lives, our church lives and more. How we respond or react to what life brings our way defines who we are in all settings.

Executing responsibility by taking the high road requires conscious effort and lots of practice.

Do the right things and the right things will happen is a universal value. It's also described in all religions. So, regardless of what you believe, it is the way to live. Those right things might not always happen on our timeline, but they do happen.

Often in business, when we don't win that contract or new customer, we look for who or what to blame.

Active listening is a skill and takes practice, as discussed in a previous column. Purposeful responding is a skill and takes practice, as well.

We can respond with our reptilian brains, which is more of a knee-jerk emotional response. Or we can use our more highly evolved cerebral cortex, which has the ability to reason. Clearly, the latter is more likely to give us the more appropriate response and results.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we'd all take full responsibility for the choices we make and not look for blame outside of ourselves? Truth is, I have yet to meet anyone who is fully functioning on that level. But working toward taking the high road with our responses is moving the right direction.

We can choose to respond by listening to understand or we could argue and be defensive. Even if we have the ability to respond, it doesn't mean we'll always get what we want, let alone when we want it. It does mean we'll respond with intention and rationality.

Freedom is being able to respond with intention. This comes from your values, your source of integrity. David Baker responded with intention, aligned with the values he and his organization believe in. Terrell Owens, likewise, responded to his Hall of Fame invitation with intention aligned with his values.

Whatever hand we're dealt, we have the response-ability to play it with intention, with purpose.

Leaders, regardless of the situation, try to understand their own role and how best to respond. We are never in control of other people. We only have the opportunity to be in control of ourselves.

How we respond is what determines whether the outcome ultimately is good — in business and in all areas of our lives. Along the way, it would be a good idea to keep in mind the Hall of Fame's core values of commitment, integrity, courage, respect and excellence.

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