

# Being As God Intends Us To Be: Even At Work Or School

by Wagdy Wahba, PhD and William Shelton



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**"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."**

Psalm 139: 23, 24 (NIV-1984\*)

At the Gregory School of Pharmacy, we have a Bible verse prominently displayed on the wall in the first floor corridor for all to see. The scripture passage from Jeremiah 29: 11\* captures God's love, care and plan for our lives. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Every time I glance at those encouraging words, I can't help but stop and reflect on God's promises and His plan and purpose for those who seek Him with all their hearts. We are created by God. We are special to Him. He knows us (Jeremiah 1: 5\*, Psalm 139: 1-4\*) He cares for us, and He has a purpose for our lives (Jeremiah 29: 11-13\*). Do all the blessings that we receive from our heavenly Father flow through us and affect our attitudes and behaviors toward others? In our profession, interacting with patients, working with others, and facing challenges are daily occurrences. Our 'way of being' determines the attitudes and behaviors that we project as we interact with others. In one of his quotes, Charles Swindoll of 'Insight for Living' ministry, pointed out that 90% of the success we have in relationships with others depends on how we react to people and to situations: He states: "I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is with you. In another quote, Charles Swindoll states that "we are in charge of our Attitudes; -Life is 10% what happens to our - and 90% how we react to it"<sup>1</sup>

When you reflect on some of the pleasant experiences in the past, can you think of a person or persons who had a positive influence on your life? Does someone who showed you grace, kindness and support come to mind? Perhaps you recall being given a second chance? What was different about such people; would you describe them as 'responsive' or as 'resistant' people?

## **The Way of Being—Responsive versus Resistant**

The book, "Leadership Self-deception," published by the Arbinger Institute, describes the 'way of being' as having

two options: the “*responsive way*” or the “*resistant way*”. This choice, how we regard others, determines the influence our attitudes and behaviors have on them.<sup>2-4</sup>

1. **The responsive way** is the attitude of looking at others as people who are God’s creation with the potential of becoming God’s children (John 1: 11-12\*). The *responsive way* means that others count as we count. Our attitudes and behaviors of compassion and sensitivity to what others are going through impact our actions and reactions. We encourage, support and build others up. We follow Jesus’ example in Mark 6:34\*, when He looked at the crowd and had compassion Jesus was sensitive to their needs both Spiritually and physically. He gave them Spiritual food; He “taught them many things” and then He fed all of them—five thousand men plus women and children until “all of them ate and were satisfied” (Mark 6: 42). Jesus’ love, compassion and sensitivity to the crowds’ needs influenced His attitude and behavior. He responded to the people’s reality—sheep without a shepherd. He acted on their specific needs. He addressed their hopes and fears’, assuring them that He was there for them, that He would never leave nor forsake them (Hebrews 13: 5\*). Jesus showed us a great example of the *responsive way*. He exemplifies to us that He came not to be served but to serve (Matthew 20: 28\*). He was the perfect example of a servant leader, always choosing the *responsive way* (Table 1)
2. **The resistant way** is the attitude of looking at people as objects, tools, vehicles, or obstacles to be avoided. The *resistant way* results in attitudes and behaviors that reflect ‘I’ and ‘them’ ‘I am better than them’. Others are less relevant and less important than I am. A person who adopts the *resistant way* acts out of feelings of insecurity. He/she is threatened and feels un-appreciated, becoming judgmental and indignant. Such a person ends up isolating him/herself and crawls into his own box of self-focus (3). Other people become objects to meet the needs and to fulfill the purposes of the *resistant*’ person. The attitudes and behaviors of such a person becomes a burden on himself and on others with whom he/she interacts (Table 1).

**Table 1-The Responsive Way versus the Resistant Way**

<b>The Responsive Way</b>	<b>The Resistant Way</b>
Looking at others as they are: ‘PEOPLE’	Looking at people as objects, tools, vehicles, irrelevant, obstacles to be avoided
Having compassion	Self-absorbed, threatened
Understanding the reality of the situation	Judgmental, unappreciative
Responding to and acting on concerns and needs of others	Response and action: ‘They are less than me’; ‘I am better’. ‘They are less relevant, less important than I am’
Quick to listen, slow to speak	Quick to speak, slow to listen
Quick to forgive	Unforgiving
Slow to become angry (James 1: 19*)	Easily provoked to anger
Addressing the needs: both physical and spiritual	Only task-oriented, no regard for people

**3. Effecting Positive Change: From the ‘Resistant’ to the ‘Responsive’ Way of Being**

You would agree that the *responsive way* is attractive and conducive to harmony and unity. It fosters a positive, productive atmosphere in the workplace, at home and the market place. On the other hand the *resistant way* is un-attractive and causes division, disharmony, and decreased productivity. The *responsive way* enhances morale while the *resistant way* destroys morale.<sup>4</sup> We will never regret extending Christ-like grace, kindness and compassion to others. The apostle Paul contrasts ‘*resistant*’ to ‘*responsive*’ attitudes and behaviors. He instructs us to put off actions that reflect the ‘*resistant way*’ which include many negative behaviors, such as hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions and factions (Galatians 5: 20\*). Instead, he urges us to pursue the fruit of the Spirit, the ‘*responsive way*’ of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5: 22-23\*). Those of us who possess the *responsive way* can help someone else to be restored

from the *resistant* to the *responsive way* by establishing open communication, treating the other as a person of importance to God and by behaviors like setting an example in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Timothy 4: 12-b\*). A *resistant* person who becomes convicted and admits his/her need to change to the *responsive way* of being should adopt an intentional mind-set to consistently reflect on his/her new way of being: The following steps can help.

- **Reflecting:** My *way of being*; Am I being “*responsive*” or “*resistant*”?
- **Recognizing:** My *way of being* is the “*resistant way*”, therefore, I need help.
- **Seeking:** God with all his/her heart (Psalm 139: 23-24\*, Jeremiah 29: 13\*)
- **Trusting:** He is the God of the second chance. (Luke 13: 6-9\*)
- **Submitting:** Surrendering to Him as Lord (James 4: 10\*)
- **Renewing:** His/her mind; not conforming to the old “*resistant*” mode (Romans 12: 2\*)
- **Communicating:** With the Lord in prayer; studying His word and Getting to know Him better (2 Peter 1: 5-8\*)
- **Examining:** Before I blame others, do I examine myself first?
- **Seeking:** Reaching out to “*responsive*” persons for help, support, and accountability

### The Theo-somatic connection

In his book *God, Faith and Health*, Dr. Jeff Levin introduced the term ‘*Theo-somatic connection*’ by which he described a relationship between the spiritual condition (*Theo-*) and the body (*somatic*).<sup>5</sup> He concluded that religious affiliation, religious fellowship, worship and prayer all have a positive effect on physical and emotional health, and on attitudes and behaviors. Figure 1 illustrates the interconnection of body, soul and spirit (1Thessalonians 5: 23-b\*). Table 2 illustrates the response to God versus the response to the world—responses that affect attitudes and behaviors.

Figure 1

## The Spiritual Condition

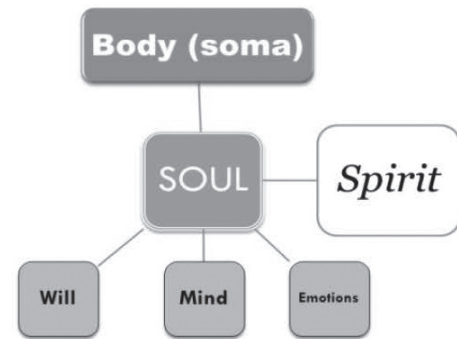


Table 2. The Theo-somatic Connection

### “The Theo-somatic connection”

RESPONSE	
God	The World
Effect	
Freedom	Isolation
Result	
[Out of the box]	[In the box]
Perspective	
Love, value others	Love Self
Outlook	
The “We” Attitude	The “They” Attitude

### Conclusion

God calls us to be as He intends us to be, regardless of the circumstances around us or with whom we happen to interact. Our “*way of being*” should always be reflective of Christ Jesus. By the power of God the Holy Spirit we can do it; we have the choice. We can start with periodic self-assessment of our attitudes and behaviors. We can ask the Lord to “search me” and “test me” and “lead me” into actions that reflect the *responsive way* (Psalm 139: 23, 24\*)

In taking such an inventory, I can answer the questions: Do I have a tendency to blame others? Am I being *responsive* or *resistant*? Do I consider my co-workers to be people, or do I see them as objects? Am I motivated to do my best for them? Am I setting an example of servant-leadership?

With God's help and complete dependence on Him, we are able to adopt actions that reflect the *responsive way* (*Philippians 4: 13\**). Without being connected to Him, we can do nothing (John 15: 5\*). At the beginning of each day, let us ask ourselves: Lord, how I can serve You today? And at the end of each day ask: how many lives did I touch today with the love and compassion of Christ? In what situation was I *responsive*? Did I exhibit the *resistant way* in any of my actions or reactions? God values you and I (*Revelation 3: 20\**) and He loves us (John 3: 16\*). When we value others as God values us; when we look at others with the eyes of Jesus (Mark 6: 34\*); our light shines before others and God is glorified in the process (Matthew 5: 16\*).

## References

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\* All scripture citations are from The New International Version Study Bible, 1984, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI 1984

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# Dispensing Spiritual Comfort

by Joy Greene, Pharm. D.



Joy Greene, Pharm. D. is an Associate Professor of Pharmacy and Assistant Director of Experiential Education at Union University School of Pharmacy in Jackson, TN. In addition to her responsibilities as a pharmacy professor, Joy has a radio ministry called "Joytime," where she delivers daily segments aimed at encouraging women in their walk with Christ. Joy speaks at women's events, teaches Sunday school and enjoys writing Bible studies for women. She and her husband, Bryan, along with their children, Ellie and Sam, attend Englewood Baptist Church in Jackson, TN. You can learn more about Joy and listen to her radio segments on her Website, [www.joytime.org](http://www.joytime.org).

Pharmacy is what we do. It's how we earn a living, and it is a big piece of how we spend our time. It is our vocation. Did you know that the word, vocation, comes from the Latin word for "calling"?<sup>1</sup> In God's word, we find many examples of this idea of being "called" to do or be something. Do you feel "called" to be a pharmacist? When you go about your daily duties as a pharmacist, do you view your work as something God has called you to do, or did you choose pharmacy as a vocation based on your interests and strengths? Maybe you feel it is a little of both. As a Christ-centered pharmacist, we give our lives to Christ, and this means we also surrender our careers as pharmacists to Him. It means we seek His will in all that we do as pharmacists and we view our job differently than those pharmacists who are not Christians. To the Christian pharmacist, we view our vocation as less of an avenue for making money, but more of a minis-

try. We ask ourselves questions like, "how am I glorifying God at work?" or "who can I serve today at work?"<sup>1</sup> We seek ways to minister to our patients and to please God with our profession. Do you believe God has divine appointments set for you each day? Do you believe He desires to be glorified through your daily work as a pharmacist? As a Christ-centered pharmacist, we should seek opportunities to serve Him, show love to others and share the good news of Christ with those people around us. As a community pharmacist, one way God has opened my heart to serving Him better through pharmacy is by caring for terminally ill patients and their families.

When I graduated from pharmacy school, I worked for an independent pharmacy that provided many different types of services to the community. One important service that was provided was filling prescriptions for