

UNITED WISDOM

Between impulse and response: room for a pause

Human Nature and Inner World

Andrey Zarinsh & Maria Evilkut

I43 · EN

@andrey.zarinsh @ilkutki

Between impulse and response: room for a pause

Epigraph

soft answer

Proverbs15:1, King James Version, BibleGateway, displayed line49; a short exact fragment, with our own Russian translation in the companion edition. Biblical counsel about speech does not guarantee an end to another person's aggression or make the recipient responsible for harm caused by someone else.

What this article is about

A short message appears on the screen: this version does not work. You immediately want to write back that the criticism is unfair and that the work was done at someone else's request anyway. The first words have already been typed. But while the message remains unsent, several different subjects can be seen: the phrase received, your impression of its tone, the prepared reply, and the question of which version is actually needed. There is no compulsory sequence between them that resolves the conversation by itself. A small pause can provide room for clarification. It does not yet mean calm, a correct decision, or the other person's agreement to continue discussing it.

Sometimes any silence is called a pause. The person did not reply, so they restrained themselves. But the absence of a message may have other circumstances: they have not seen the screen, are busy, do not know the answer, or have decided to end the conversation. Silence alone does not tell us what happened inside. Even for oneself, it helps to distinguish postponing an action from what was understood during that time. One can refrain from sending a harsh draft and remain irritated. One can respond quickly and to the point. This article does not establish that a slower response is always wiser, or that a feeling must disappear before any acceptable answer.

We will consider a pause as a small, voluntary way to notice the subject of the next action. Epictetus and a selected verse from Proverbs offer different philosophical and religious questions about reaction and speech. The methodological guide by Verbruggen and colleagues retains its separate research subject. None of these sources automatically certifies the quality of a particular answer. An appropriate delay, a message sent, and the outcome of a conversation receive their own descriptions separately. There is no need to promise complete

control over oneself or another person's reaction. It is enough to see an available choice and finish observing when the next step actually concerns the task.

I. What appeared before the answer

In our example, the content of the incoming phrase is known. It does not reveal the complete reason for dissatisfaction. Perhaps the recipient needs a different file size, another date, or a different meaning in the text. Perhaps the comment really is unpleasant in form. These remain different possibilities for now. A first impression of tone can be acknowledged as our impression, without declaring it the sender's established intention. The conversation then retains room for a question about the substance. There is no need to prove that the feeling is wrong. We simply should not present one received sentence as a complete account of another person's inner position.

The impulse can be named specifically too. You want to send the phrase already typed, close the conversation, justify yourself immediately, or ask for clarification. This describes an available intention rather than a ready-made theory of your character. If there are no words yet, you need not invent them for the sake of a note. If you notice only the action after sending, that is a different moment of observation. There is no need to construct a pause retrospectively that you do not remember. Precision begins with what is actually available now, rather than a demand to reconstruct every inner event in an ideal order.

The phrase received, its interpretation, and a prepared answer can be recorded separately if the format suits you. The first line concerns the message. The second concerns how you understood it. The third concerns what you intend to do. This separation does not guarantee less irritation, but helps avoid combining different claims into one completed story. For example, the text may contain no statement of deliberate devaluation, although that is how its reader experienced it. The experience remains a fact of their account. A claim about another person's intention still needs a separate basis or honestly remains an assumption.

We can begin more simply: what needs to be resolved in this conversation? Clarifying an unsuitable parameter differs from wanting to defend one's entire dignity. If a boundary of communication is affected, that can also be named without attaching a compulsory guess about motive. There is not always only one subject, but the subjects can be distinguished. The next answer then has an understandable task. It can clarify a condition, state a refusal, or propose another format. Not every unpleasant message requires one large reply about personality, relationships, and the fairness of the entire preceding history.

II. Delaying an action does not yet explain its meaning

Suppose the draft remains unsent for several minutes. This means only that the selected action has not yet occurred. The person may have read a condition, considered an option, or simply become distracted. If understanding one's own pause matters, it is better to name what actually happened without filling the interval attractively. An unsent text does not automatically prove maturity or a changed habit. It leaves the possibility of the next choice. That is enough for a small observation: the action has been delayed, the initial feeling may remain, and the next message's content is not determined by the fact of waiting alone.

A pause need not mean complete inactivity. One can open the original agreement, check a version of the material, or ask which question remains unanswered. These are actions rather than empty time. They should be considered according to their own results. Opening the correspondence does not yet mean that the relevant condition has been found. Finding a condition does not yet mean that this is what the recipient intended. Nevertheless, a more precise question can now be prepared. Observation should not assign a single general meaning to the whole interval when it contained different operations and different degrees of knowledge.

Sometimes waiting is inconvenient for another participant. If a question depends on timing, one can communicate the need to return to it later and state an available deadline, if that deadline is genuinely realistic. Such a message is not an accomplished substantive answer, but changes the status of waiting. The recipient knows the proposed format and can say whether it suits them. Silence without an agreement should not automatically be called a jointly accepted pause. A personal choice to delay does not require a complete explanation of inner life, but a shared task may require information relevant to it.

In some situations, waiting is unnecessary. A straightforward correction of an identified typo may be clear immediately. Refusing an unsuitable request may also be clear without lengthy reflection. This article has no compulsory duration, number of breaths, or rule requiring every response to be delayed. What matters is the possibility of noticing a choice when it is available and needed. If an immediate threat arises, the first question concerns safety and appropriate help, rather than the perfection of a pause. An everyday exercise should not turn delay into a virtue regardless of circumstances and actual consequences for participants.

III. Several possible answers do not mean several promises

For the selected message, different types of continuation can be seen. Clarify exactly what does not work. Name your limit on further work. Check the agreement before discussing it. End the conversation if continuing it is not needed now. These options belong to our editorial example, rather than a universal instruction. Having several possibilities does not mean that each is safe, appropriate, or will be accepted by the recipient. It only helps avoid treating the first prepared text as the only answer in existence. An action must then be selected that fits the subject, conditions, and one's readiness.

It helps to distinguish an option from a promise. We can imagine a message about a new version without being ready to guarantee its deadline. The proposal must then retain its real status. If someone feels relief during a pause, this does not make their chosen plan feasible. If they want to avoid an unpleasant conversation, that does not yet tell us that the task is closed. An option helps reflection, while a promise connects us to a future result. Between them is a check of what can genuinely be offered. Every good idea that arises need not become an immediate commitment for an attractive conclusion to the conversation.

One answer may address only part of the question. Asking for a parameter to be clarified does not resolve a concern about tone. Stating a boundary does not correct a file. Checking the original version does not communicate a new deadline to the recipient. A partial step can be chosen consciously and named as such. It is then neither dismissed for lacking a complete solution nor presented as the completion of the entire task. In our example, clarification may be needed first, followed by a separate conversation about the format of comments. The sequence remains the participants' choice, rather than a compulsory scheme that must be followed for a pause to count as genuine.

Options do not require endless enumeration. Once the next appropriate step has been found, the inner selection can finish. If it has not been found, the question can remain open or available help can be chosen. A list of dozens of messages does not necessarily add the grounds needed for a decision. This article does not evaluate attention by the number of replies imagined. Sometimes it is enough to see that another person's presumed intention is unknown and a particular condition can be asked about. Sometimes it is enough to acknowledge that continuing does not suit you. Clarifying the subject matters more than a complete catalogue of every reaction a person could theoretically make in their life.

IV. Notice an action without demanding that a feeling disappear

In our example, irritation may remain after checking the original agreement. This does not make the condition found incorrect or establish which answer should be sent. A feeling can be acknowledged separately while a work question is addressed. The article does not propose compulsory calm as a permit to act. It discusses an available choice when someone can notice it. If the observation format increases tension or does not suit them, the note can be stopped. There is no need to become a permanent observer of every inner movement for one clarifying remark or a clear refusal to have the right to be expressed.

The suggestion to look at a draft concerns a text that is available. Which facts does it name? Where does it contain an assumption about someone else's motive? Which action does it propose? These are editorial questions. They do not establish a diagnosis of the sender or an emotional mechanism. One can notice that a prepared reply attributes deliberate humiliation without a separate basis, and change that particular claim. Disagreement with the tone can remain. Changing one phrase does not require declaring the original feeling false or choosing compulsory friendliness. It clarifies the content of a particular message that can still be edited.

Sometimes removing a promise is more useful than softening every word. If someone has written that they will redo everything immediately, although they cannot, a more precise answer may name the available scope. Outwardly, it does not necessarily look gentler. But the other participant receives information relevant to the task. The pause here is used to check readiness, rather than only to change tone. Its meaning is determined by the selected action. A friendly text with an impossible deadline does not become appropriate merely because it contains no harsh expressions and was prepared after several minutes of waiting.

Observation does not guarantee complete control. Someone may notice one impulse and miss another. They may send a message earlier than they wished and understand later that clarification is needed. This is a particular occasion with a possible next action, rather than proof of general incapacity. One can check whether specific content needs correction, a new deadline needs stating, or an apology for a particular remark is needed. An already sent text cannot be cancelled by an inner decision not to do it again. But action remains possible within what is available now, without turning a mistake into a compulsory verdict on the whole personality.

V. Epictetus: a question about an impression, not a justification of harm

In the selected section20 of the Enchiridion, Epictetus discusses a reaction to a provoking impression and the possibility of postponement. In section34, he also considers delaying action before a promised pleasure. This is primary normative philosophy in Elizabeth Carter's translation, rather than a modern clinical program. Editorially, it lets us ask whether a first impression and an already chosen answer coincide. But adjacent statements about what constitutes an insult do not become a denial of actual harm here. A blow or threat does not disappear through a changed description, and the recipient need not prove a correct inner reaction before seeking protection.

A contemporary application must retain its own authored scale. We can see that a phrase on the screen was understood as proof of contempt, although its basis is unknown. This is a question about interpreting a particular message. It does not mean that every consequence of someone else's action has been invented by its recipient or that all circumstances lie under their free control. Our editorial example does not transfer strong ancient propositions into a universal theory of health and relationships. The reader retains the right to discuss an external fact, their own experience, and an appropriate response separately, without being required to accept every historical proposition in the entire work.

A philosophical source can be read as a partner in thought, rather than an evaluator of today's exercise. If someone did not manage to pause, the selected line does not establish their moral level. If they did, it does not confirm that their answer was fair. These questions need the content and conditions of a particular occasion. In our example, an inaccurate text can still be sent after waiting. We therefore need to return to the selected subject rather than treating the interval as an accomplished stamp of quality. Reading supports a question, but an action's outcome remains open until an actual check.

It is especially important not to turn philosophical attention into a requirement to remain silent before any violation. The possibility of postponing a remark can coexist with a clear refusal, ending contact, or requesting necessary help. The choice depends on circumstances. This article has no right to declare one approach morally compulsory for everyone. A reader can notice an impression and still consider an immediate response necessary. They can decide not to continue. Epictetus remains a historical primary text, while today's decision retains its grounds in the real task, rights, and available possibilities of the person.

VI. Proverbs: an answer's tone and the limits of a promise

The selected verse, Proverbs15:1, contrasts ways of speaking and their relationship to anger. This is literary and religious counsel in the KJV version read, rather than an experiment with our message. It can be read as a question about the form of an answer: am I intensifying an argument through a particular expression? But the source does not establish how every recipient will behave. A gentle tone does not guarantee safety or agreement, and someone else's aggression does not become the responsibility of a person who could not find ideal words. Our application is limited to examining our own text, without promising to control someone else through the correct wording.

Form and content remain different subjects. We can answer politely and report an incorrect fact. We can refuse clearly without a detailed explanation. We can name an inconvenient condition that needs discussion even if it will not make the conversation pleasant. Checking tone should therefore not erase an essential message. In our example, the question about an unsuitable version needs information. Removing it for the sake of general friendliness leaves the task unclear. A precise remark can retain respect and disagreement together, without promising that the recipient will perceive it that way or necessarily respond in the same style.

The religious meaning of the selected verse may matter to one reader and not be shared by another. Agreeing on a work version does not require a shared worldview. People can discuss the content, the format of comments, and the right to end the conversation. If they wish to speak separately about a spiritual understanding of speech, they can name that subject. The verse then does not become a hidden condition under which the recipient must accept any form of address. The source retains its genre, while a shared agreement receives a separate basis in participants' real answers, available format, and freely expressed consent.

A pause here can have a limited role: checking whether the chosen text corresponds to what we want to say. If it contains an attack on the whole personality instead of a comment on the material, that can be noticed. If it hides a refusal behind an indefinite promise, that can also be noticed. Not every correction makes a text longer or gentler. Sometimes a short, specific phrase is needed. Its value is not determined by a single feature of style. It acquires meaning through the message's subject, the accuracy of its content, and the limit of the commitment that the person is genuinely ready to offer.

VII. Research response inhibition and an everyday pause

In their2019 methodological guide, Verbruggen and colleagues consider a special task with a stop signal. Estimating response inhibition depends on task design, assumptions, and data analysis; strategic waiting and omissions have distinct significance. The selected parts of the primary text are not a trial of our editorial pause in correspondence. They cannot establish the necessary duration of everyday waiting or the quality of a particular decision. The scientific subject retains its method, rather than becoming a general measurement of wisdom by the length of time someone has not replied to a message.

For an ordinary note, a simpler limit can be noticed: the absence of an action does not by itself reveal its cause. Someone has not pressed send, but we do not know whether they checked the content. This is our editorial reasoning, rather than a laboratory measure. We do not calculate inhibition speed or evaluate brain function from one draft. An accurate description of the occasion is useful enough without a scientific title. We can say that the text remains unsent, a condition has been clarified, or a new answer has been prepared. Each claim is checked within its own subject and does not become an assessment of the whole capacity for self-control.

A sequence of everyday notes should not be presented as a replication of a scientific task. Several messages have different contents, recipients, and conditions. Even recording time does not automatically create equivalent trials. This article offers neither home diagnosis based on response delay nor a promised therapeutic effect from keeping records. If a decision needs professional assessment, that is a separate task. For our example, clarifying the message and an available action is enough. Declining unnecessary measurement preserves scientific methods' actual subject and allows someone to finish an ordinary conversation without an invented clinical conclusion.

The scientific source is useful here primarily for its demand to distinguish what is measured and how. Yet even this comparison belongs to the editors. The authors did not develop our format for responding to a comment or certify its result. We can retain this boundary and still ask everyday questions. What was received? What remained unknown? What was prepared? What was sent? Which answer actually arrived? These questions have available subjects and do not require assigning experimental status to ordinary correspondence. Research authority should not fill the interval between a prepared remark and the actual outcome of communication.

VIII. A pause belongs to one person; a conversation belongs to several

We can decide to delay our own message, but this does not give us another person's agreement to wait indefinitely. If there is a shared task, its conditions need consideration. If there is a right to end contact, a pause does not oblige us to return. Each participant's possibility of choosing remains separate. In our example, we can offer clarification and receive an answer that a further version is no longer needed. This changes the next action. It does not prove that the time spent reflecting was wrongly used. It communicates the recipient's actual decision, which cannot be replaced by our readiness to continue working.

Silence should not be used as a covert test of another person's patience. If someone deliberately delays an answer to provoke a desired reaction and then judge its recipient, this is a different intention. Our practice concerns our own text and next action, rather than controlling someone else's behavior. For a shared agreement, an available message about timing is more useful when the task needs one. The recipient is free to choose their own answer or not participate. A pause does not confer a right to collect private information, conduct a test of attachment, or treat resulting worry as proof of the desired relationship to us.

The privacy of inner reflection can be preserved. There is no need to explain every feeling to say when an answer about a task is available. The other participant does not need to give a detailed report of their experience while waiting either. Information relevant to the selected agreement is enough. If the conversation concerns relationships more deeply, it needs an appropriate format and consent, rather than an automatic expansion of a work question. This limit helps avoid turning a small attention practice into a system of mutual surveillance. People can clarify actions while remaining free not to disclose every inner interval before their own remark.

Once sent, the content exists for another person. An inner feeling of correctness does not establish that the message has been read, understood, or accepted. Its available status can be checked, and a real answer awaited if needed. If an error is found, a particular correction is required. It cannot be treated as resolved merely because the author now thinks differently about their original impulse. Observation and communication connect through actual actions. Their distinction preserves the possibility of finishing a personal note without falsely claiming that the whole shared situation has already become clear and favorable for everyone.

IX. A small conclusion without promising complete control

In our example, the outcome may be one question about an unsuitable parameter. Before sending, it is prepared. After sending, it has been sent. After the recipient answers, new information appears with which the next stage can be decided. This sequence does not describe the entirety of inner development, but is clear enough for the task. If a feeling remains, it need not be declared nonexistent for a successful outcome. If the answer was inaccurate, its content can be clarified. The pause receives no automatic certificate of success. It remains a circumstance of a chosen action whose meaning needs consideration through its actual subject.

A useful stopping condition is a next step found or an unknown honestly named. There is no need to consider every possible reaction, achieve complete inner peace, and foresee someone else's answer. A decision can be postponed in an agreed format, an unsuitable promise declined, or a note finished. If observation becomes a continual demand to check every word, it can be stopped. The article does not establish an obligation to live under constant inner supervision. A small attentiveness has the right to remain small: it concerns one occasion and should not become a new way to issue a sweeping verdict on oneself.

Different responses are possible because a person has some available choices, not unlimited control. Conditions may be difficult, information incomplete, and available possibilities limited. This is precisely why naming the choice that actually exists matters. A particular draft can be left unsent. A condition can be asked about. A boundary can be retained. We can acknowledge that the grounds are currently insufficient. Each action has its own scale and consequences. Room for a pause is possible space for clarification in a particular situation, rather than a promise always to choose perfectly, govern every emotion, or make every conversation partner calm.

What this means in practice

If the format suits you, choose one ordinary occasion on which an answer can still be prepared. Name the message received, your first interpretation, and your intended action separately. If something is unknown, do not fill the gap. Look at which subject needs addressing now: clarifying a condition, communicating an available deadline, stating a boundary, or ending a conversation. One suitable step can be selected without a complete list of options. This is a voluntary editorial note, not a scientific task, therapy, or measurement of self-control. Using it promises no disappearance of feeling, personality change, or particular reaction from the recipient.

Check the selected text for content and the feasibility of its promise if that review is possible now. Do not present a guess about motive as fact. Do not treat silence as someone else's

agreement. If a task needs time, communicate the relevant waiting format and preserve the possibility of a different answer. A pause does not oblige anyone to endure harm or continue unsuitable contact. The note can stop when the next step is clear, an unknown is stated, or the format itself does not suit you. The actual action and outcome are then checked separately: a prepared message has not yet been sent, and a sent message does not yet mean the question is resolved.

Key quotation

> *time and respite*

Epictetus, Enchiridion,20. Elizabeth Carter, MIT, displayed line58; a short exact fragment, with our own Russian translation in the companion edition. Print edition and page are unestablished. Historical philosophical counsel does not become a guarantee of control, justification of harm caused, or a contemporary clinical recommendation.

Connections between traditions

Epictetus lets us ask about an impression and the next action; Proverbs lets us ask about the form of speech. The methodological guide studies response measurement in a special task and retains its own assumptions. The comparison is editorial, without a shared scale of wisdom or a claim of historical influence. It does not establish agreement among all traditions or make our note a validated program of the primary authors. A philosophical question, religious counsel, research measure, and the outcome of ordinary correspondence obtain different grounds. A personal pause does not reveal someone else's motive, consent, or state, and does not remove responsibility for the particular content sent.

Sources

1. Epictetus, Enchiridion, Elizabeth Carter, MIT. Attribution and selected sections20/34 with displayed adjacent context were read, not the entire work; print edition and pages are unestablished. Historical assertions about harm, illness, and social roles are not contemporary facts or demands to endure harm. International rights UNKNOWN; no full import.

2. Proverbs15:1, King James Version, BibleGateway. One selected verse and version were read, not the entire chapter or book; historical personal authorship by Solomon is unestablished. Literary and religious genre, not an empirical guarantee of another person's reaction. International rights UNKNOWN; no full import.

3. Frederick Verbruggen and colleagues, A consensus guide to capturing the ability to inhibit actions and impulsive behaviors in the stop-signal task, eLife2019,8:e46323,

DOI10.7554/eLife.46323; available PDF dated29April2019. Original abstract and selected methodological parts were read, not the entire26-page text, calculations, code, or cited studies. ©2019Verbruggenetal, CC Attribution in the PDF; CardiffORCA links to CC BY3.0, the licence version identified through this record rather than certification of every edition. This is changed editorial exposition and translation, without claiming the authors' endorsement; no full import or direct scientific quotations.

Tags

pause, impulse, response, attention, impression, interpretation, message, draft, choice, conditions, deadline, waiting, silence, consent, boundaries, privacy, responsibility, action, result, Epictetus, Proverbs, Carter, Verbruggen, research, response inhibition, measurement, limitations, self-observation, correspondence, United Wisdom

About the authors

Andrey Zarinsh is the author and founder of United Wisdom. He explores inner transformation, the unity of traditions, intercultural dialogue, and contemporary spiritual discipline. Instagram: @andrey.zarinsh.

Maria Evilkut is a co-author of United Wisdom. Alongside her research, she seeks to test these ideas in practice and observe how the principles of unity and mutual understanding work in real life between people and cultures. Instagram: @ilkutki.