

How To Address the Hard Questions

Members of your bargaining unit may have all sorts of reasons for not wanting to join our union. Some of these reasons might not make sense to you, but always remember that they are real to the person raising the objection. A helpful technique when dealing with objections is A.A.R.:

Affirm – Let them know you are listening, you understand and their feelings are valid.

Answer – Give a truthful, concise answer to the question. Do not be evasive or your entire message will be lost.

Redirect – Bring the conversation back to your message.

EXAMPLES OF ANSWERING HARD QUESTIONS USING A.A.R.

1. Why are dues so high? I'm not sure what I get for my dues and money is really tight for me and my family.

Affirm: I understand times are tough and I know you have two small children at home – that must be difficult!

Answer: The reality is, our union needs resources in order to support our members – from trainings to representation in legal cases, as well as the day-to-day expenses of paying rent, utilities, phone bills, salaries of staff who support our local when we need it, printing literature and more. Our dues are necessary to ensure that we have a strong and organized voice at the local, state and national level.

Redirect: Our member's efforts, supported by our dues dollars, collectively fight to improve our contract. We want to continue that process and we need a strong union to do that. Will you join us?

2. I don't think the union president addresses the concerns of all the members. (Example: She's just interested in high school issues; we work in the middle school.)

Affirm: I know that relationships can vary within every local. I appreciate your concern about your middle school co-workers.

Answer: I hope you have reached out to your president to express your concerns. The truth is . . . you and I currently have the right to be union members and have a voice within the district and inside our union. I think it's important to exercise that right and I hope you do!

Redirect: Attacks like the Janus decision threaten our right to exercise that voice and exert our power. No union, no power, no voice. It's as simple as that

PRACTICE

Create your own responses to the following excuses given for not joining the Union.

I'm getting out of education next year.

Why are dues so high? I'm not sure what I get for my dues and money is really tight for me and my family.

Why does our union only support Democrats for political office?

The Union only cares about full-time teachers.

I'm still mad about when _____ happened.

I don't need to join this year, we're not bargaining.

I don't think the union president addresses the concerns of all the members.
(Example: She's just interested in high school issues; we work in the middle school.)

I don't like unions!

I'll join the local but not NEA-NH or NEA.

The Union protects bad teacher. Why would I be involved with a union that is just going to protect lazy educators?
