

Silence...

a/k/a: "...stare..."

"...curled mouth..."

"...hand covering face..."



Defusing Strategy:

Silence is a reaction. Identify the reaction and proceed accordingly.

Silence is golden? On average, introverts take eight seconds longer to respond in conversation. They also score significantly higher than extroverts in creativity tests, which may make them more open to your idea. So, give it an extra eight seconds.

Don't assume the worst. Silence doesn't always mean "no." Perhaps your listeners simply need time to build a mental model.

Don't be afraid of silence. Nature abhors any vacuum, including silence during meetings and presentations. Anticipate the silence and let it work for you, as others attempt to fill in with their opinions.

Go off the record. Higher-ups may be wary of giving responses that sound like official endorsement. Ask for informal feedback.

"Glad you don't object." If you like to live dangerously, take silence as assent. Weigh potential wins and losses before you take this drastic step.

Understand the mix of introverts and extroverts on your staff. Use pacing, pauses, advance notice, and other techniques that permit time for reflection. Allow silence. To solicit opinions, ask open-ended questions such as "What do you think?"