
Personal Rejection Reflection

Back in the 70's I was a fairly successful sales rep for a firm for about three years, which positioned me to move up to a sales manager position with the same company in a different branch office 300 miles south of my current location. I took over a sales operation which had never exhibited much esprit de corps and consequently, never had much sales success.

Since my style was pretty upbeat and enthusiastic, the new sales team was drawn to me personally. We became a pretty tight knit group and the sales performance improved. This spawned a personality conflict between me and the VP of that branch. Without realizing it or doing it purposefully, I was punching a lot of holes in excuses he had been making to corporate for several years about the lack of sales progress in that market.

Several years passed but the divide between us only widened. Since he was the guy I reported to, he began to tighten down the screws, making my business life very uncomfortable. After a while, I began to realize my days were probably numbered with that particular company, so I began to do a little freelance work on the weekends in order to position myself for a future job transition. Long story short, when he got wind of my game plan, he walked in one morning and fired me on the spot. The important part of the story is what he said after he fired me. Listen to this:

"I want you to go home and fill your bathtub with water. I want you stick your hand in the water and then pull it out real quick. For however long the hole remains in the water, that's how long I'll miss you."

After reading this, it should be pretty easy to imagine how much that stung, but even though I didn't like being on the receiving end of that drubbing, it paints a perfect picture of what rejection is all about.

As you prospect for potential clients, don't ever forget that not everybody wants to see you; quite frankly, most people don't want to see you. Therefore, don't forget the old Chinese proverb; *"He who see most...sell most!"*

When rejection happens you can't afford to waste any emotional energy by personalizing it. This is a normal part of selling and has

no reflection on your worth as a person. You can often achieve something of value on failed sales calls, but only if you handle yourself in a friendly and businesslike manner toward the rejecting buyer.

Let's say you are trying to schedule an appointment, but are rejected. Rather than verbally retaliating, consider ending the call gracefully by thanking the prospect for their time, and then mention the possibility of future contact, concluding with asking for a referral. Here's an example of how that might sound to a *suspect*:

"Thanks for talking with me anyway. With your permission, I'd like to leave my card, being aware that circumstances could change, and who knows, you may want to talk with me down the road. Additionally, I would be very grateful if you would point me in the direction of a business/neighbor that might want to hear about my service/product now."

When I was personally selling, I gained some clients as a result of this *rejection reflection*. Had I left sales appointments with my ego bruised, saying only, "Okay, thanks," I would have kept returning to square one and been forced to start the prospecting cycle from hello. When rejection occurs, I think it's better to follow the Yogi Berra philosophy; "If you come to a fork in the road, take it." With that in mind, for the 70% of time you are rejected, consider this:

Above everything else, realize that rejection won't kill you. According to a study some years ago, successful salespeople know better than to take *no* personally, and view periodic rejection as a chance to evaluate their technique in order to make necessary adjustments.

The next time you encounter rejection, just whip out a notepad and make a list of what you've lost by not closing. Odds are it probably won't look nearly as bad on paper as it seems in your mind. Then make a second list of everything you have to gain by pushing ahead and trying again with renewed determination.

While you are taking notes from a failed sales effort, jot down:

- Any body language or other signs that you may have overlooked or misread.

- Think back to objections you might have fumbled, so you can prep for the next encounter.
- By keeping track of these seemingly minor details, you may be able to avoid some future failures.

When you're rejected, will you get bitter, or will you get better?

Kites rise against the wind.