

Overcoming Reluctance

All the business development techniques in the world won't help if you are unable to overcome reluctance to do what is required.

This includes:

- Reluctance to ask a client or contact for a referral
- Reluctance to ask a prospect to meet with you
- Reluctance to speak candidly with a client to build trust
- Reluctance to ask probing questions to really understand the client's problems and goals
- Reluctance to talk about a solution with real conviction
- Reluctance to ask for the business and deal with objections head on
- Reluctance to drive the agenda if the deal stalls

Your reluctance may be well founded. For instance, it just may not be the appropriate time to ask for a referral from a certain client if asking risks undermining an important relationship.

However, you need to be honest with yourself. Is your reluctance more about your own fear of rejection rather than the issue of preserving the relationship? Is your assessment of any legitimate risk really valid? Are you using distractions and excuses to camouflage the real reasons for your reluctance?

Being honest with yourself also means identifying those points in the business development process where you tend to avoid taking action that should be taken or where you behave in a way that undermines your business development efforts – what are your habits at pressure points?

Once you have identified a habit, you need to detach yourself from the thoughts that arise at a pressure point. Observe your thoughts as if you were watching a movie so that you can be aware of them as separate entities to yourself.

Are your thoughts predicting a negative outcome such as rejection? Observe your physical reactions to your thoughts. More than likely your body is reacting to the negative thought by engaging its “flight” responses.

Recognise that thousands of years of evolution have designed you to avoid perceived threats. The mind floods the body with hormones to make you feel bad as well as prepare you for flight. Your mind is also recalling the effects of strong doses of those penalty drugs from past experiences to convince you to stay away from the threat. Obviously, these hormones can be useful because they help us to avoid danger and thus survive.

When it comes to business development, the worst case scenario will always be an inconsequential threat in the scheme of things, i.e. a bruised ego is more likely than

serious danger. Isolate what your thoughts identify as the threat (i.e. the negative result of your actions) and decide if that threat is really valid.

You need to stand outside of yourself and realise that any negative feelings you have are physiological and are a natural part of who you are. Therefore, you will operate alongside your reluctance not in the absence of reluctance.

Once you have detached yourself from your thoughts, you need to control them. Focus on the reason it is important to do what is required, which is typically related to the value you can bring to the client.

The key take-away's for you from this lesson should be:

1. Fear of rejection is natural, but what have you REALLY got to lose?
2. If you start with nothing and you end with nothing then what have you lost? Nothing.
3. The more you do, the easier it becomes. Fear gives way to process. JUST DO IT!