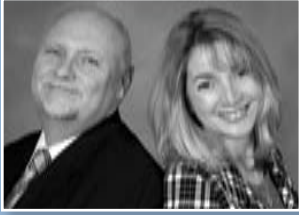


'NO'

IS JUST A STEPPING STONE ON THE PATH TO SUCCESS

EDITORIAL | RICHARD FENTON AND ANDREA WALTZ



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You walk out of the office, shoulders slumped and head hanging low. The meeting did not go the way you had hoped. Shoving through the glass doors and exiting the building you heave a sigh, the words of your prospect still ringing in your ears, **“No, we’re going to pass.”** Motivation is dwindling fast. For a moment, you think about blowing off your last appointment of the day and heading back to the office, in favor of catching up on paperwork.

But what if it didn’t have to be this way? Imagine getting a “no” from a prospect and then pushing through those same doors — happy, excited and energized. Imagine actually thinking to yourself, “Hooray, the client said no!”

In order to tap into the “power of no” there are five key strategies that you can apply today.

Change your mental model of “success” and “failure.” Most people operate with the following mental model: They see themselves in the middle, with success on one end and failure on the other. They do everything they can to move toward success and away from failure. But what if that model was wrong? What if that model was reconfigured?

What if, rather than seeing failure as something to be avoided, it became a “stepping stone” on the path to success? Put another way: “Yes” is the destination, but “no” is how you get there.

To achieve significant success in today’s world, top performers do not see success and failure (or yes and no) as opposites — rather opposite sides of the same coin that depend on each other.

Intentionally increase your “failure rate” — go for “no”! There is a story about a young man who asked Tom Watson, the prominent CEO of IBM, how he could be more successful. Watson responded, “Double your failure rate.”

Watson wasn’t trying to be funny. Success is, to a large degree, a numbers game. As such, one of the fastest ways to increase your success is to intentionally increase your failure rate. In other words, increase the number of times you hear prospects say “no” to you. Of course, increasing the number of times you hear “no” will eventually increase the number of times you hear “yes.”



Create “no-awareness” by counting your “no’s.” Here’s a question for you: How many total “no’s” did you personally obtain yesterday? Last week? Last month? How many for the year? Do you know? Well, you should!

Most people, if they actually counted the number of times they hear “no” during a typical day or week, would be shocked to see how low that number actually is. If you don’t know your number, it’s time for you to start counting every “no” you hear, because the very act of counting your “no’s” will increase your “no-awareness” and that, in turn, will enhance your “no-focus.”

Celebrate your failures, not just your successes. When was the last time you rewarded yourself for failing? Probably never! That needs to change.

It’s natural to be excited about our successes and to celebrate them, to reward ourselves for the achievement. But, if the key to success is to increase your failure rate, then it only makes sense to celebrate your setbacks, too! When someone turns you down, celebrate it! Instead of mentally punishing yourself for not succeed-

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ing, buy yourself an ice cream cone and say, "That 'no' put me one step closer to success!" If you did, maybe failure — and the word no — would no longer have negative hold on your thoughts and emotions.

"No" doesn't mean never, it means not yet. Woody Allen said that 80% of success is simply showing up. While the power of showing up should not be underestimated, the reality is that showing up — in and of itself — is usually not enough. The key to success is to show up, and then to keep showing up! In a word: persistence.

Is this to suggest that when someone keeps telling you "no" you should stay at it forever? No. Though Winston Churchill famously declared one should never, never, never, never quit, knowing *when* to quit is an important skill. The problem here is that most people think the time to quit has come long before it actually has!

How do you know the perfect time to quit? Unfortunately, there is not a definitive number of "no's" at which one should throw his/her hands up and go home — after all, every situation and every prospect is different. So the answer always begins with an analysis as to whether the person you're trying to sell to is a qualified buyer. If they are unqualified (they neither want nor need what you have to offer), then you should pack it up and move on. However, if they do need what you've got — even if they don't want it yet — then pursue them for as long as it takes!

So the next time you walk out of a prospect's office having collected another "no," remember these five key points and say, "**Hooray! I just got a no!**" Because when you increase your failure rate and go for "no," the "yeses" will eventually come — they always do! AS III



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