

# The Give and Take of Rejection

by Dennis Roberts

Why is it that one tiny word, "No", can evoke so much fear into the hearts and minds of so many? Part of everyday life as a leader/manager requires you to handle rejection day in and day out. How well do you cope? What can you do to more effectively handle rejection?

## *What it is that is being rejected?*

### *Personality*

Rejection, or criticism, of you may be aimed at your personality or ego. Where this occurs there is no escaping it and can leave you deflated or demoralised. Character assassinations of this type are not constructive for the soul and should be avoided.

### *Behaviour*

You are not your behaviour. Here criticism of your behaviour is a step removed from your ego. It reflects a choice you made at a point in time. This choice may have been made consciously or subconsciously. We all make mistakes (or bad choices), so you have the capacity to learn from them and make alternate choices. In coaching I ask my clients only two things, make conscious choices and accept the consequences of those choices. As a rule of thumb criticise the behaviour not the person.



## *Rejection in a sales setting.*

### *Relationship Selling*

There are two approaches to selling - relationship selling and transactional selling. If you adopt the former then rejection may only be a temporary setback. The relationship may remain intact and you have the opportunity to re-group and re-engage.

### *Transactional Selling*

If your sales approach is transactional then rejection may signal 'game over'. Unfortunately this is the approach used in many sales transactions and many cold calling approaches.

Your objective should be to reframe the "No" into "No, not at this time". This gives you a re-entry point and time to assess where your strategy failed. Always work with the mindset that "failure is feedback" and ask your prospect "What could have I done differently to win your business?" or "What would it take to win the deal?"

This is priceless because your prospect is now giving you the reason why. It may highlight the very objection where you lost out and present an opportunity to close the objection.

## *Rejection in a sales setting.*

### *Emotion*

Make no mistake rejection is as difficult for the person saying "No" as it is for you to hear it. Why? Because many mistake what they are rejecting and get caught up in their own discomfort in conveying it.

Rejection evokes emotion - yours and theirs.

Coming back to relationship selling, if you have nurtured the relationship and given generously of your time, knowledge, ideas, and attention then your prospect will feel a sense of indebtedness to you. Note, indebtedness is a feeling, not a logical thought.

Most decisions, especially buying decisions, are made emotionally and justified rationally. The universal Law of Reciprocity applies here. When you do things for someone they feel a growing sense of indebtedness or loyalty to do something in return, hopefully the transaction or even a referral.

### *Logic*

Sometimes your proposal will be rejected for logical reasons, eg better offer, cheaper price, more window space, better location, more passers-by, etc. Once again learn from your mistakes, refine your skills or change your behaviour and re-engage.

### *Words & Action*

If you don't walk your talk then you may expect rejection. Communications experts suggest verbal communications account for only 7% of all communications with the remainder 93% relating to your body language and tone of voice.

Walk your talk or risk losing the business.

### *Success Tips*

What can you do to better handle rejection in its many forms? Try these:

1. Detach from your emotions. Remember that most rejection is not personal. Take the opportunity to ask for feedback and learn your lessons.  
Tip: Don't give feedback on feedback.
2. Shift to relationship selling mode. Even if the relationship is a brief one show that you care. That's what service delivery is all about.
3. Respect your customer's decision. Even it defies logic remember that most decisions are illogical anyway. Having said that work it to your advantage. Practice reading emotions and body language. There are only two rules of selling:  
No.1 The customer is always right, and No. 2 Re-read rule No. 1
4. Focus on being of service. This is where you deliver the added value, which justifies your price premium. Too many salespeople find themselves competing on price. Find and deliver the value.
5. Treat doing business and the human interaction that comes with it as a game. Have some fun with it. Emotions (the trigger for most decisions) are a form of energy and the easiest energy to share is humour and fun.

So, there you have it. Who would have thought that being rejected could end up so much fun? Until next time.



#### *About the author*

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