

NO

The More You *No*

EMBRACE REJECTION TO IMPROVE YOUR SALES GAME.

BY JAMIE FRIEDLANDER

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hen Rebecca Parry was 18, she sold spots for the Yellow Pages in Australia. She heard *no* more times than she could count. She recalls throwing her pen in her cubicle and walking outside in order to calm down after unsuccessful sales calls.

The constant rejection was exhausting, but she knew all of her pent-up anger wasn't getting her anywhere. Instead of wallowing, she decided to turn her frustration into motivation. "The rejection made me more determined to persist and turn a *no* into a *yes*," she says.

Now, Parry is the head of sales for the Los Angeles outpost of Moxion, an entertainment startup. She says the constant rejection she faced early in her sales career prepared her to succeed in a high-level sales role in which deals often take two years to close. "It made me much more resilient," she says.

Being told *no* is an inevitable part of sales, and growing comfortable with it is crucial, says Jacob Clendenning, a

business coach and managing broker for a real estate company based in Livermore, Colorado. "Embracing rejection is the most important thing in sales," he says.

IT'S IN OUR DNA

Clendenning believes most of us struggle with rejection because it's intertwined with our self-worth. Eli Schaugh—a master success and life coach based in the Los Angeles area—agrees.

"I think the people who have the easiest time dealing with rejection are the ones who have the most self-respect and self-esteem," says Schaugh, who is also a practitioner of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), a method for helping people adjust their mindset. "It's less a matter of experience and more a matter of emotional fortitude."

Although fear of failure is a driving force behind our discomfort with being rejected, another seemingly paradoxical reason is fear of success.

“Fear of success can be paralyzing, because it means your life is going to change and you’re getting outside of your comfort zone,” Schaugh says. “And everyone wants to hold onto that for dear life.”

FIVE STEPS TOWARD GROWTH

Some people are better at facing rejection than others because their role models demonstrated appropriate behavior during that person’s formative years, Clendenning says.

“It’s the same as our relationship with money,” he says. “If you grew up in a household that was paycheck to paycheck, you’re likely going to live paycheck to paycheck. The same is true of rejection: If they didn’t handle it well, you’re not going to handle it well either.”

If you struggle with rejection, here are five steps to help you master this area of your life so you hear *yes* more often than you hear *no*.

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READING LIST

THE POWER OF AWARENESS

And Other Secrets from the World’s Foremost Spies, Detectives, and Special Operators on How to Stay Safe and Save Your Life

By **Dan Schilling**

A member of two American special ops squadrons during his military career, Dan Schilling knows about risks and danger. He’s participated in combat missions dealing with biological and nuclear weapons.

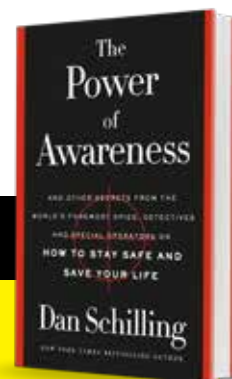
What’s his key to staying safe in dangerous situations? Awareness, he writes in his new book. Schilling shares six rules and six tools readers can use to increase their awareness. These won’t just make readers safe if they somehow find themselves in a war zone. The tips can help readers be more aware and present in all settings—like a high-stakes meeting, a first date, or walking down a dark street at night. By increasing awareness, Schilling writes, you can stay on guard and avoid blind spots.

“Humans are creatures of habit, which goes some way toward explaining why we can be so unreliable when it comes to recalling details in a crisis or under stress,” he writes. “It’s the blind spot you can’t see because you’re already blinded by familiarity.”

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-J.J.

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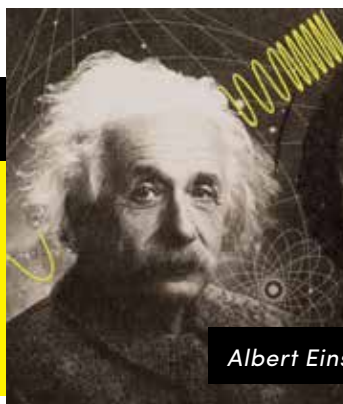




QUOTEWORTHY

“It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer.”

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Albert Einstein

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STEP 1: **CHANGE YOUR INNER CIRCLE.**

One way to change your relationship with rejection, Clendenning says, is to change who you spend most of your time with.

If you wanted to quit smoking, you wouldn’t hang out with a bunch of smokers all day. The same applies here: If you want to succeed in sales, there’s no point spending all of your time with people who fear failure. Instead, focus on those who use it as leverage to move forward

STEP 2: **BE MORE PREPARED.**

A basic, often overlooked strategy is simply to be more prepared. Learn how to be nimble, study and perfect your sales scripts, and practice on as many prospective clients as possible.

“Sales is 100% preparation,” Clendenning says. “If you’re only practicing at 50%, you’re only going to be 50% as good. You’re going to set yourself up for failure by not being prepared.”

STEP 3: **LEARN FROM YOUR NO’S.**

One of Schaug’s favorite sayings is that there’s no such thing as failure, only feedback. “As long as you’re learning, you’re growing,” he says. Instead of being embarrassed when you lose a sale, it’s important to take time to understand why you didn’t succeed.

“The people who have the most success are those who can learn from their mistakes,” he says. “As long as you can learn from the mistake, grow from that and be able to use it differently the next time, then the failure actually becomes a success.”

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WISE WORDS FROM...

NATASHA KEHIMKAR, CEO AND
FOUNDER OF MALIDA ADVISORS

“Rejection in my personal life gave me the ability to navigate rejection in my professional life, rather than the other way around. As a child, I was the only person of color in my school and social circle, and it was difficult—especially in the early years. By learning how to deal with rejection and bullying early on, I developed the strength and resilience that serve me well today.”

BOUNCE BACK

4 TIPS ON HANDLING REJECTION FROM A DATING EXPERT

Tracy Ross, a couples therapist based in New York City, is no stranger to seeing people get rejected. Lucky for us, the ways she coaches her clients to recover from a bad breakup can be instructive anytime you are spurned, even as a seller.

1. FEEL YOUR EMOTIONS.

People often avoid feeling the pain and sadness that accompanies a breakup, Ross says. They'll try to numb or distract themselves by pretending they don't care or quickly getting involved with someone else.

Ross says that although it's important to be resilient, it's also crucial to process and really feel your negative emotions. The same applies in sales: Don't ignore rejection. It's important to let yourself feel upset, because it'll likely motivate you to improve your skills as a seller.

2. SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE.

After a breakup, it's important to avoid those who give unsolicited advice like, "I never liked him anyways." The same can be said of who you surround yourself with professionally. Don't spend time with people who say things like, "You didn't want that client anyways." Instead, choose to be around people who support you and encourage you to do better.

3. REMEMBER: IT'S PROBABLY NOT PERSONAL.

Most of the time, breakups are not personal, Ross says. There are myriad reasons why you might get dumped, and the same is true in sales: If you focus on something you think is wrong with you—you're not smart enough or sharp enough—you will just get stuck on one of your own insecurities.

"Being rejected never feels good, but if you don't personalize it, you will be able to feel it and then move on," Ross says.

4. DON'T BE SELF-CONSCIOUS OR ASHAMED.

Talking about your breakup with loved ones can be an opportunity to get closer to certain people in your life. "People are embarrassed when they are rejected, but it's such a universal human experience and can be very connecting when shared with trusted family and friends," Ross says.

If you lose a sale, don't be afraid to share the news with your colleagues. It could lead to stronger professional bonds.

Embracing
rejection
is the most
important
thing
in sales.





Ingrid Ulloa
Social Media Manager

SUCCESS SAYS

“Listening honestly is the first step toward influencing someone over to your way of thinking. Recently my best friend and I debated on what we thought was a fair rate for an accountant to prepare her taxes. First, I listened and appreciated her opinion. Then, I encouraged her to put herself in that person’s shoes and to get more quotes. Ultimately, after taking my advice, she realized that the price for the service was appropriate for the market.”

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STEP 4: **LOOK INWARD.**

Although you might be tempted to study the best of the best in sales in order to perfect your craft, the ideal person to study is yourself.

“You can study everyone else all day long,” Schaugh says. “But if you can’t learn from your own failures, getting to their successes is probably not going to happen. The best class you can take for your own continued success is studying your own development.”

STEP 5: **ADOPT AN OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK.**

Let’s say you’re going through a rough patch—you’re hearing no after no to the point where it feels like you’ll never hear yes again. Before going into a new sale, borrow a tried-and-true NLP strategy: Don’t think about what can go wrong, but rather what can go right.

“Lock your mind around the idea that you will do the right thing in order to make the right result happen,” Schaugh says. “Focus all of your energy on how to make that happen rather than thinking about how you can start planning for obstacles. Because when you do that, it’s going to make more of them appear.”

MAKE IT PERSONAL

One of the hardest parts about working in sales is learning to cope with the inevitable rejection you will face. There’s a reason sales isn’t for everyone. But one valuable part of thriving in this industry is that you’ll have more emotional fortitude in your personal life.

When Parry, the former Yellow Pages salesperson, was in her 30s, she decided to pursue a longtime passion of hers: becoming a jazz singer. She knew it was late in the game for her to attempt to break into the jazz world, but she took a leap of faith anyways.

“I eventually broke into established jazz music circles, setting up a jazz band that I sang in and managed alongside my day job,” she says. “I think facing rejection in sales definitely helped me be a little more resilient and have more perseverance in my personal life.” ♦

FRIEDLANDER IS A FREELANCE WRITER AND NEW MOM.