

3. Objections are good.

There is a big difference between a genuine question of concern and an “I’m done with you” objection. Is it a sign of interest or resistance? That is the key question. When your prospect presents every objection in the book, such outright resistance should be a red flag to you. In other words, you are probably going down the wrong road by not properly reading your prospect. What this person is really saying is: “Go away. I have heard enough. I don’t see where or how this can help me.”

Did you really uncover your prospect’s wants and needs, or are you merely vomiting a memorized list of features and benefits? Many persuaders vomit information. Here is the issue: Your prospects will buy for their reasons and for only their reasons. They don’t care about why you like the product or how much you know about the product. Hence, you need to find out the one or two reasons why they want to buy your product or service. Once you’ve uncovered their purchasing criteria, you then tell them how your product or service will benefit them. When you list features and benefits, two things can happen. It can suck the energy out of the persuasion process and it can actually give your prospects reasons not to buy that they otherwise wouldn’t have even imagined. Find the one or two most appealing benefits, the ones your prospects are really going to care about, and use them as leverage to help your prospects purchase. *Then*, and only then, you can fill in the blanks with your product or service’s other features and benefits. Here is the key to effective persuasion: Before they buy or have made the decision to purchase, your prospects are looking for reasons *not* to buy. After the mental decision to buy has been made, they are then looking for reasons why they are making a good purchase.

Great persuaders will always have fewer objections to handle than old-style persuaders will. If you really understand your prospect, you “pre-solve” before the objection has even been raised. “Pre-solving” of objections can be effectively accomplished by using a technique called inoculation. Do you inoculate your prospects?

The term “inoculation” comes from the medical field: Injecting a weak dose of a virus into a patient inoculates or prevents the patient from actually getting the disease. The

body's immune system fights off this weak form of the disease and then is prepared when the full disease attacks. Likewise, when you are presenting to an audience who has an opposing viewpoint to yours standing in the wing, you have to "inoculate" them with a weakened form of the other side's argument. For example, if you know someone is going to attack your viewpoint, you prepare your audience in advance for that attack. The idea is to address the issues that your opponent will bring up and then directly refute them.

The important point to understand is that the inoculation must be a weak form of the "virus." If you inoculated a human body with the strong strain of a disease, s/he could become sick or even die. Hence, the dose must be weak enough to prepare the body for the stronger virus but not so strong that it overpowers the body. Likewise in persuasion, you don't want to give strong doses. You don't want to give your prospects all of the other side of the persuasive message's ammunition. On the other hand, if you don't prepare your audience for what they are about to hear, the sting of your opponent's words, logic or testimony might be too much for them to handle and they could switch sides. As a result, you might lose some prospects you otherwise might have gained.

In our day-to-day life, we are surrounded by countless examples of inoculation, many of which are used in the courtroom. The defense attorney stands up and says, "The prosecution will call my client mean, evil, a terrible husband and a poor member of society, but this is not true, as I will show you over the next couple of weeks...." So, when the prosecution then stands up and states anything close to what the defense attorney has claimed they will, the jury is prepared, thinking the prosecution is acting exactly the way the defense said they would. This inoculation strategy equips the jurors with a way to ignore, or even discount, the prosecutor's arguments.

Society needs to understand the importance of inoculation in regards to smoking, drugs, teenage pregnancy and others issues. Street gangs also use this inoculation tool to their advantage. When they are trying to recruit members to join their gang, they inoculate potential gang members by telling them their parents, teachers and cops will encourage them not to join. They will tell them all the reasons their opponents will give, fueling

them with ammunition for the impending attack. This preparation enables the potential gang member to handle the oncoming assault from parents, teachers and others.

We know our children will come in contact with forces that do not advocate the views and beliefs we wish to instill in our kids. Who should be the first contact with your children—you or the drug dealer? When you inoculate people, they can mentally prepare arguments supporting their stance. This reinforcement prevents them from switching teams. The more prepared they are, the more they'll hold fast to their attitudes and beliefs. So too, the more deeply this reinforcement is ingrained, the more difficult it will become for your prospects to be swayed.

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