

HOW I CONQUERED
CALL RELUCTANCE,
FEAR OF SELF-PROMOTION &
INCREASED MY
PROSPECTING!



SIDNEY C. WALKER

To order: **ConquerCallReluctance.com** (also on Audible)

ABOUT THIS BOOK...

This book will help you conquer call reluctance and fear of self-promotion.

Everybody is promoting something, and most people have some resistance to the process of getting other people interested in whatever you are offering.

The resources in this book are a reflection of my thirty-plus years as a full-time sales performance coach. This information has helped thousands of people break through their barriers and find the will to make the prospecting calls they need to make. Many different perspectives are presented because everyone is different. The key is finding a state of mind that allows *you* to take action.

From a bigger perspective, this book is about how to positively deal with the resistance you have to doing what you need to do to succeed. There is a part of you that doesn't want to take any risks, but there is a part of you that is practically fearless. If you can learn to block out the part that is putting on the brakes and listen more carefully to the part that can do anything, you can find a way to make the prospecting calls you need to make! That is the promise of this book.

"Sid helped me develop an approach to prospecting and self-promotion that took me from struggling...to being in the top 1% of my company of 7,000 reps. If you are facing this kind of challenge, this book is the perfect place to start!"

Randall G. Riley, CLU, ChFC; Northwestern Mutual

"Extraordinarily 'reader friendly' in tone, commentary, organization and presentation, 'How I Conquered Call Reluctance, Fear of Self-Promotion & Increased My Prospecting!' is an impressively informative read from beginning to end. Imminently practical, this is one of those life-changing books that will linger in the mind and memory long after it has been finished and set back upon the shelf. Very highly recommended for community and academic library Self-Help/Self-Improvement reference collections."

Small Press Bookwatch: James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief, Midwest Book Review

"I nearly quit my sales position in my tenth year working in downtown Manhattan. A turning point was learning the psychology of Sid's approach to overcoming prospecting resistance which is timeless and priceless. Within a year, I was earning over \$1 million a year. It's all right here in this book."

Barbara Treadwell, CLU, ChFC, CFP; Treadwell & Associates

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**Published by High Plains Publications
San Diego, California**

ISBN: 0-9621177-7-3

Cover Design: Ken Williams, Jr.; GraphicsQuarter.net

Editing: Greg Miller; OtherNetwork.com

Copyediting: Lori Kranz

DEDICATION



Dedicated to those willing to venture outside the confines of the controlling ego to discover the unlimited true Self, who can do anything—*your intuitive spirit.*

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

- The purpose of this book is to create a state of mind for making prospecting calls or taking action on anything you need to do that you are resisting.
- Overcoming fear is a complex subject and there are overlaps or repetition between the different perspectives presented. It is difficult to put all the information into separate compartments.
- Repetition of key concepts from different perspectives increases the likelihood of a breakthrough. Different people need to hear different words for the door to open. I have also found that what worked today may need to be slightly modified for tomorrow. As you change and grow, you need to expand your awareness to diffuse your fear. The key is to find the words, phrases, and concepts that allow you to take action.
- I have purposely not used graphics in order to emphasize what I think is the most important information other than chapter heads, subheads, and occasional italics. I want *you* to decide what's important for *you*. I recommend highlighting as you read to make it easy to find key phrases when you are ready to create your warm-up.
- There is a lot of my personal experience in this book. I am not trying to win you over to my point of view or convince you of anything. My main goal is to help you take action on things you want to do in a way that feels right to you. Don't let an occasional difference in opinion or perspective get in the way of finding what you need to break through. Just take a black marker to the parts you disagree with. I won't mind.
- I have used the term *client* to be synonymous with potential clients, candidates, and all forms of customers.
- I have used the word *advisor* to represent anyone selling any kind of product or service. Everyone is selling or promoting

something. In my coaching practice, I teach my clients to be trusted advisors rather than salespeople. I discuss the difference at length.

- I have used the pronoun *they* and its derivatives as much as possible instead of saying *he* or *she*, *him* or *her*. When I do use the pronouns *he* and *she*, I have used *she* intermittently rather than use *he* all the time.
- I have used the word *product* to represent anything you are promoting: product, service, yourself, your ideas, your goals, your agenda, your desires, etc.

INTRODUCTION

It was the spring of 1973. I was about to lose my college deferment from the military draft upon graduation from Michigan State. My lottery number was low and had been called years before. My next address, after a hilltop fraternity house in East Lansing, would be an army barracks in the jungle of Vietnam.

Then on June 19, 1973, the US Congress passed an amendment that would forbid any further US involvement in Southeast Asia. It took a couple of more years to actually end the war. Most important, I graduated from college on June 8 and only had to worry about my future as a soldier for eleven days before I was relieved from military duty.

My thoughts and feelings were going in every direction. Of course, I was elated at the news. I had been preparing for the worst that war had to offer. We had all been made highly aware of the atrocity of war by the army of full-time war protestors in those days. I was an intense twenty-one-year-old with some athletic ability and a short temper. At that time in my life, I would have been a fierce fighter more than a good soldier. I would have likely been overconfident and gotten killed taking risks I didn't need to take just to prove I was fearless.

It was a major blessing that I didn't have to go to war. It felt like a miracle when that ever-present dark reality that had been looming for years, just disappeared. Over 50,000 other souls just like me were not so lucky and another 150,000 were wounded for life. I owe them all for their service and acknowledge that their sacrifice eventually brought the war to an end.

After graduation, I stayed in East Lansing to help a friend build and open an ice arena. Then I spent the winter season managing the ice arena and playing ice hockey with former college stars in the middle of the night. As I pondered my future, everyone said I should be in sales. I think what they

meant was I had a knack for promoting things. I had no idea what a sales career would really be like. Life insurance was the only product that held any interest for me and successful agents seemed to have an upscale lifestyle. So I confidently and naively said, “Life insurance it is.”

That was the beginning of my lifelong battle with call reluctance and overcoming the fear of self-promotion.

I went to work for my dad’s agent in Gross Pointe, Michigan, a wealthy area in north Detroit on the St. Clair River. I rented a room in a mansion close to the office and headed off to the three-day training with four other guys. We learned about insurance products, which were limited compared to today’s.

Much of the time was spent learning phone scripts that we endlessly role-played. The prospect’s name in all of the scripts was “Bill.” I found out later from one of my fellow trainees that when he finally got someone live on the phone for the first time to talk about insurance, he called the guy “Bill” when his name was something else! Hysterical. He didn’t get the appointment.

My well-meaning but clueless sales manager, only a couple of years older, had me cold calling rich people about disability insurance starting at 5 p.m. for several hours each night.

That was a nightmare. The first half of my phoning session was having people yelling and swearing at me for calling them during dinner. There were no answering machines back then.

Then the second half was mostly “No, not interested.” *Click!* I realized I was not going to be able to do this job, which ruined all my carefully designed plans for the future. I made up excuses why I couldn’t make it to the phoning session each night and then proceeded to party and chase women to ease the pain of my first career disaster.

I have done a lot of speaking to financial advisors as a sales coach. When I recounted this story on occasion in front of a group, I would say it took years of therapy to get over that

experience. That always got a laugh, as the edge of truth often does. It actually took most of my adult life and a lot of struggle and anguish to conquer my fears and resistance related to making prospecting calls.

Heading back to East Lansing was an obvious move after my cold-calling fiasco in Gross Pointe. I knew hundreds of people from a combination of college and being the commissioner of three men's hockey leagues. I did my best in the life insurance business and got some recognition for several large sales. But after a few years, I knew my call reluctance issue was holding me back and it wasn't going away.

So I tried to branch out. My thinking was that it would be easier to make prospecting calls for other products. I had learned the hard way that discussing your life insurance needs was not the most popular topic of conversation. My new sales manager was also a friend and aware of my dilemma. He had been with Dale Carnegie for many years prior to getting into the life insurance business both as a salesperson and an instructor. He taught me his version of a retail sales training course, which I did for one of my life insurance clients who was involved with a large plumbing and heating company that had retail outlets. They loved what I did and their sales went up noticeably right away.

But even after that great success, when it came time to contact other retail business owners to offer that same training to them...I couldn't pick up the phone.

I had spent weeks learning to do the course, weeks delivering the course, had incredible results, and could not make a single prospecting call to promote it. Then I knew I had a real problem because the product wasn't the issue. My experiences of just a few years had changed me from a hard-charging, ambitious young go-getter into a prospecting chicken.

To make matters worse, I was fervently independent and an innovator at heart. I knew even then I would have difficulty working for someone. I needed to have my own business,

which I have managed to maintain for forty-plus years. Of course, I only wanted to promote products that I felt like I had a hand in creating. I was fifteen years ahead of my time as a sales coach and came to discover that promoting a new approach was a much bigger challenge than I had expected.

I had also developed my own approach to the job search process and was doing executive outplacement for Fortune 500 companies before I was thirty.

I stayed involved in the life insurance business as a coach, which eventually grew into speaking and writing books based on my coaching experience with financial advisors. Speaking to large life insurance agencies around the country became a means to attract coaching clients. That combination of activities has kept me employed for decades.

Although I have always struggled with making prospecting calls, I painstakingly got my confidence back over many years from a combination of self-study, coaching others, and getting to the leadership level of a wide variety of awareness trainings, including ten years as a lay monk in a monastery.

Interestingly, I was never able to escape promoting and selling my own products. I have had many periods of success with different but related products along with plenty of those moments when I wanted to quit and do something totally different. But good things always happened when I found a way to attract some new clients and apply my innovative abilities. There was never any other job that felt right to me, even on the worst days.

Then, somewhere along the way, it occurred to me that maybe everything was perfect somehow.

What if one of the things I was here to do was to help people overcome their call reluctance and fear of self-promotion? Maybe I could help them not have to go through what I went through.

I had a similar experience during the earlier years of my coaching career. I had been waiting for my real job to come along. Being a sales coach wasn't considered a career at that point, and even I thought that my avant garde coaching practice would be a stepping-stone to something else. My parents were always wondering when I was going to get a real job. Then, as more and more people found their way to becoming a business coach of some kind, I realized that maybe I had been in the right job all along.

As I look back over my career, I have consistently been drawn to the most challenging aspects of sales and communication. The good news is that I never gave up creating and promoting my own products, and you will be the beneficiary if you keep reading.

What I am about to share with you is timeless and applies to everyone in some way. We are all promoting something and most of us have some form of resistance to doing what we need to do. As the old adage says, "There is nothing new under the sun," but that doesn't mean that people know how to use the information that's available to have a breakthrough. And that is my hope for you, my brothers and sisters: that you have a breakthrough to a new level of peace and prosperity as the result of reading this book.

I am living proof that *anyone* can overcome call reluctance and the fear of self-promotion enough to make the calls you need to make. It is probably more accurate to say that it is difficult if not impossible to get rid of all your fears, doubts, and resistance.

The most important breakthrough comes when you realize that nothing can stop you if you can find a perspective that allows you to take action. And that *bigger perspective* is what I will share with you.

1. WHAT'S POSSIBLE

This book represents over thirty years of research and experience in getting past the barriers that keep you from making the prospecting calls you want to make.

The official title for this sort of thing is *overcoming call reluctance* and *the fear of self-promotion*, which are complex psychological issues. What I have found is that the solutions to getting yourself to risk making more prospecting calls are the same solutions for taking any kind of action where you are experiencing resistance or fear to proceed.

In other words, *this book is a tool to help you increase your ability to do what you need to do in the face of your own resistance.*

What risks do you need to take in life that may be accompanied by resistance? The list is long. Here are a few of the more common examples related to picking up the phone:

- Make a call to promote your product or service...
- Introduce yourself as a potential resource (networking)...
- Make a call to get a job interview...

- Call someone to ask them out on a date...
- Call someone to ask them for a favor...
- Call someone who is upset with you...
- Make a call to deal with a difficult issue you've been putting off...

Most of us have resistance to doing certain things we want or need to do. It is a powerful experience to move past those barriers and take the action you want to take.

To me, the ability to act on what feels intuitively right in spite of any internal resistance is your greatest source of self-fulfillment. It's about being who you really are, rather than settling for less.

Since I have always created and promoted my own products and services, I have had to prospect my whole career, especially for coaching clients. Bottom line: *my personal barriers to prospecting have cost me a lot of money I could have made, and a lot of anxiety.*

The energy you spend not making the prospecting calls you need to make is enormous. You can spend a tremendous amount of time rationalizing and justifying your lack of sales activity. You have to cope with results that are far less than what you are capable of achieving. And the worst part is you spend massive amounts of time dreading making the calls you need to make. I have often said, it takes more energy *not* to prospect than it does to actually make the calls.

Of course, making prospecting calls also *requires* energy. It takes more drive than most other activities, especially in the beginning. It's easy to put off and find other "more important" things to do. I have to gather all my resolve to make the extra effort required to get into action and do what I need to do. It's normal to have to psych yourself up to make prospecting calls and learn to interact with people in an outgoing way if you want to do well.

THE BIG QUESTION

So here's the big question. How bad do you want the things you say you want? Are you willing to do whatever is necessary, within reason, to overcome your barriers to prospecting?

It may seem almost impossible to you now to have a major breakthrough with prospecting, but I assure you it *is* possible if you are willing to learn to think differently and try new things.

The biggest challenge is that we have been trained to think in a way that actually creates call reluctance and fear of self-promotion.

The good news is you can be untrained or unlearn how you relate to prospecting. You can create a mindset that will allow you to set your fears, doubts, and resistance aside and make the calls you need to make or do whatever you need to do.

Getting rid of *all* your fear, doubt, worry, and anxiety—or however you manifest your resistance—is not the goal.

Your best path to success is to diffuse whatever is causing your resistance to the point where it won't stop you. You may always find prospecting a major effort. I still have to push myself to prospect, but I actually now find prospecting to be the simplest part of my job and have found a way to actually enjoy it most of the time.

Prospecting is the most highly paid activity of anything you do in sales and usually the most important activity because it starts the client acquisition process. If you need prospects and you don't do any prospecting, you're going to struggle to stay in business.

For many, prospecting has a big enough payoff that they are willing to put up with some discomfort. The other good news is that even a small amount of regular prospecting goes a long way.

I once heard direct marketing guru Dan Kennedy say there was one little thing he learned to do that made him millions. He said, “Never go home until you have talked to at least one new potential client each day.”

That’s roughly twenty new people per month. When I first heard Dan say that, I thought, “I can find one person a day.” Then I realized that if I added twenty new prospective clients to my inventory each month, I would have the business that I wanted!

The moral of the story is, any increase in your current level of prospecting can have a big impact.

CAN YOU IMAGINE?

Can you imagine what would it feel like to be skilled and confident at prospecting?

Feelings are usually the most motivating thing you can experience. Once I have spent some time interviewing my prospective coaching clients to figure out what they want from a coaching engagement, I repeat back what I have learned from them and ask, “Is this what you want?” They say yes. But it’s the next couple of questions that are even more important. Questions like “Are you committed to having the things you say you want, or are they in the ‘It would be nice’ category?” Most people say they are committed.

Then I ask them how it would feel to accomplish the things they say they want. They respond. Then my final two questions are, “Is that an important feeling for you to have?” and “Are you willing to do whatever is necessary, within reason, to have that feeling?”

How people feel when they have achieved something they really want is a powerful motivator. So let me ask you a few questions that will evoke some feeling.

What are all the things you could have if you didn't have any barriers to prospecting?

Create a list you can review and update, keep adding to it, and keep track of the items you accomplish. I call it a Done List.

It is powerful to occasionally review a list of things you have accomplished. I organize my list by the year. It's human nature to quickly forget about what you've accomplished and focus on what you don't have yet. This is normal, but not an empowering perspective. How would it make you feel to have a whole list of things you have achieved this year that were important to you and yours?

Another tip is to acknowledge all progress. Baby steps lead to success, so the baby steps count.

We will talk more about how to stop negatively judging yourself and your activity or lack of it. That is actually one of the baby steps with the biggest impact. Can you imagine not negatively judging yourself or your sales activity ever again? How would that feel? Do you think that would free up some energy?

If you could find a way to prospect that feels right, how would that feel? If you could find a way to prospect that fits your personal style and strengths and you discovered you could actually do it, how would that feel?

Would you be willing to consider that there are many positive aspects to prospecting that you have not yet had a chance to embrace?

For example, prospecting can be a high. When you are prospecting and having success, there is nothing more fun and invigorating. It's a rush to approach something challenging and experience success.

When you prospect in a way that feels right, it's a great panacea for whatever ails you. You have a better attitude. You have more confidence. You get a spring back in your step.

This doesn't mean that everyone starts saying yes to your offer. But what does happen is that you engage a part of the brain that knows that prospecting is good.

Your controlling, judging, evaluating, analytical ego is usually in a panic. However, your intuitive spirit, who you really are, is much more brave and has access to much greater resources.

One of the most powerful experiences I have ever had was the first time I felt self-sufficient. I knew I could make it in this world, if I could prospect. I knew I could make the money I needed to do the things I wanted, if I could prospect. For me, that was a turning point. That was big.

But I also knew I had some work to do because I had to push myself to prospect. It always felt good to do what I needed to do, but I was surprised at how much energy it took to get on the phone every day. I was determined and scared at the same time. I could see the power of prospecting to achieve my dreams, but I also could see I had barriers in the way. Was there a way for me to overcome my fears and resistance to prospecting so I could have the things I wanted in life?

2. THE REALITY OF PROSPECTING

If you are in direct sales, full-time or part-time; paid by commission, self-employed, or promoting anything, you need to prospect to create new sales. There are exceptions, the main one being that you have enough clients to keep you busy or you have hired someone to prospect for you. For those of us who still need clients and are doing the prospecting ourselves, prospecting is not optional.

Most of us have to motivate ourselves.

Some of you may have a sales manager who makes money when you do. That can be good or not so good, depending on your relationship. Some of you have mouths to feed or at least a significant other to keep happy. So yes, your inner circle is pulling for you and wants you to do well, but for the most part, no one else cares whether you prospect or not. *It's all up to you.*

There can be intense pressure to succeed. You need to make a specific amount of money to make things work. And, if you don't make a certain amount of money, you can lose privileges or even our job. So the pressure is on.

Some people find the need to make money the only motivation they require to be a regular prospector. I call those the lucky

ones. But if you are reading this book, the need to make money may not be a big enough motivator to push you to be consistent.

If you have resistance to prospecting, you probably put it off until your back's against the wall and then you get more motivated for a short period. This is totally normal behavior. It makes perfect sense to respond that way. Why would you push yourself to do something you would rather not do?

The problem is that *having* to do something is not usually enough motivation to do what you need to do to get the level of success you desire. In this scenario, prospecting is often something you put up with and can easily put off. So do you think you are ever going to become a regular prospector if it is something you would rather not do? Probably not, and that's a good place to start.

What is your motivation, besides the fact that you need the money?

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

You would be surprised at the number of people who don't think they know what really motivates them. I have interviewed thousands of people in my career and regularly ask that question in one form or another. Most people have trouble answering a question beyond the obvious need to make money.

The answer is simpler than you think, and I am going to give you the big-picture answer to speed up the process. You already know this answer to be true, but we lose touch with it.

Our main motivation, underneath all the complexity of life, is that we are here to make the world a better place in some way for those lives we touch. And ideally we want to be of service in a way that best fits our aptitudes, interests, and life goals.

I see people spending hours writing purpose statements with elaborate language and specifics. A purpose statement is a good thing as long as it creates a feeling of motivation. *Feeling* a sense of purpose is more important than having a purpose statement. The purpose statement should be a pointer to the feeling that motivates you.

Author Simon Sinek's strategy is to "Start with Why." I highly recommend his eighteen-minute TED Talk. What he so eloquently points out is that if you know why you are doing something and you tell others that is why you are doing it, they will respond in a much more positive way toward you.

Personally, now I see my service to God and humanity as the rent I pay for my place on Earth. There have been major periods of my life when I was working hard but out of touch with a focus on service, and I was restless, frustrated, and unfulfilled. Of course, not everyone is going to find making the world a better place for others their source of motivation. But for most of us, it's an excellent place to start, especially if you are going to be promoting a product to make other people's lives better in some way.

PROSPECTING REALITIES

To complete our beginning discussion on the basic realities of prospecting, consider the following:

- The activity of prospecting has been around forever. You can prospect for gold, oil, a job, a place to live, a life partner, clients—you name it. Prospecting fits right into our dualistic reality of good and bad, positive and negative, etc. Some people are interested in what we have to offer and some are not. Under the pressure of having to make money, we quickly forget that the possibility for success or failure is what makes life interesting. If everyone we talked to was interested in our product and they all ended up buying, there would not be much challenge involved, which would also mean we would not get paid much for our efforts. One of the

reasons direct sales is a highly paid activity is the challenge of prospecting. It's emotionally complex work to find people who are interested in your product mainly because most people are *not* going to be interested, which means you will hear a lot of no's.

- Equally as old as the hills are the established rules that have to be followed to succeed. If you are making up your own rules to override the basic rules of the game, it can be hazardous to your attitude and ultimately to your level of success.

The most basic rule is that you need to make a certain number of prospecting calls to get certain results. Sure, you can make one call and get lucky, but those odds are not sustainable. If you resist doing the amount of prospecting that you need to reach your goals, you are going to suffer. Not doing enough prospecting is the equivalent of buying lottery tickets to fund your retirement years. The odds are better that you will be struck by lightning. So let's say you can be as creative as you want, but you have to do the activity required to earn a sale.

- To be a good prospector, you have to be a catalyst, a beacon of light that shows people how to have something in their life be more, better, different, easier, cost less, take less time, take less human effort, etc.
- Prospecting is a risk to most people for a variety of reasons we will discuss in detail. Part of the risk is that you are asking people to say yes or no to your offer.
- If you risk doing the required activity of prospecting with moderate skill and the right attitude, you are guaranteed success because a certain number of people are going to buy a useful product or service. Another advantage to consistent prospecting is consistent income. If your prospecting is sporadic, you will see more peaks and valleys in your income.

- The act of calling on prospects is the most significant and profitable activity in sales and promotion. Prospecting starts the process of finding an interested potential buyer. Prospecting shows your commitment to the process—and creates an opportunity. When you make a prospecting call, you are up to bat and now have a chance to get on base or even hit a home run.

You actually make real money with every call, regardless of the outcome. You make more money per second prospecting than any other activity, even if it appears that nothing is happening.

Prospecting is what creates the opportunity for you to earn an income by finding clients who will pay you for your product or service. So if prospecting is what really creates your income, then take the time (number of hours) you prospect and divide it into your income: that is how much you make per hour when you are prospecting. It isn't a perfect analogy, but it's an important perspective to consider.

- Simply stated, the ultimate key to being a successful prospector is not to let anything stop you from making your calls. Unfortunately for many of us, making those calls is much more complicated than “Just do it.”

3. THE PROBLEM: YOUR EGO

The main cause of call reluctance and the fear of self-promotion is the ego.

There are different schools of thought on what the ego is and how it works. I will present some basics from my perspective, which is all we need for our purposes here even if some may say it is a bit oversimplified. I'm sure you'll agree your goal is to be able to make prospecting calls, not take a college course on the ego. So here we go.

The ego is born when we are born. The reality we inherit is that we can't take care of ourselves as babies and need the help of adults to survive. The impact of this reality is huge. The main assumption we make is that we need to make sure the adults around us like us in order to survive. So being accepted by other people as a means of survival is one of our first lessons. And it's a powerful lesson that gets reinforced by society in a variety of ways throughout our lives.

To a great extent, our ego is formed by how others feel about us. This is shocking if you think about it. A primary part of who we think we are, the basis for how we live our lives, is based on a collection of other people's opinions, not our own. When we are born, we are not aware of ourselves—that comes later. Our first awareness is of everyone and everything other

than ourselves. We eventually start to identify ourselves by contrast to all that is outside of us or *not us*.

As the child has more and more contact with people, a functional version of who we think we are is formed, but it is only a reflection of what others think about us; it is not who we really are. This is why the ego is called the *false self*, or *pseudo self*. Who we really are has to come from *within*, which is not based at all on other people's opinions. So now the players have been announced. You have the ego, which is based on a collection of other people's thoughts about you, and your true self or what I like to call your *intuitive spirit*, which is based on an inner you that was not created as a reaction to other people's opinions.

The ego also has other jobs that are related to our discussion. The ego's job is to protect us from potential harm—basically—to keep us alive. The ego works with memories of potentially dangerous experiences. If the ego sees or perceives something happening or about to happen that reminds it of a past dangerous situation, it does what it can to stop us from taking any kind of action other than to withdraw. To fight back is another option the ego might consider in order to protect us, but let's leave that option off the table for now since it doesn't really apply to this discussion.

So by getting us to move away from the danger, the ego is doing its job to assure our survival in a world full of traps and snares.

The ego is extremely intelligent and crafty. It is as smart as you are on your best day. And your ego will use any means it can dream up to keep you from taking action that it would consider dangerous in some way. After all, to your ego your survival is a life or death matter that it does not approach lightly.

YOU ARE THE CHOOSER

Your level of awareness and personal development will determine how much you relate to yourself as your ego.

Many people don't see much more than their ego sees. Your ego is a highly integrated part of you that can feel so familiar you may think that it is who you are. But the reality is you have the capacity to be much more if you learn to identify the ego's limited agenda and replace it with a more intelligent version of yourself.

The best evidence that you are not your ego is that you can choose to go against the ego's advice. If you can recognize that your ego is telling you to stop doing something that is potentially dangerous, like making prospecting calls, you don't have to stop if you don't want to. So who is it that is saying no to the ego's warning? Who is making a decision to do something different than what the ego wants you to do? It's like the old cartoons that show the devil on one shoulder whispering into one ear and an angel on the other shoulder whispering into the other ear. Most of the time, the selfish, controlling, and cunning ego is going to sound more like the devil than like the angel.

The ego relates to the physical body as who we are. The ego's concept of reality is that we have a body and we are separate from everyone else because that is how it appears in physical reality. Everyone has their own body. However, we are not limited to the ego's reality of being a separate physical body. We have other realities, like that of being a spirit that is connected to other people and other things in some way. We will discuss the reality of spirit more later.

The most important thing to see at this point is that we have a reality that is created by the part of us we call the ego and we can go against its advice if we want. The reason this is important is that if you can argue with your ego or go against its advice, you are not your ego. You are something bigger. I like to say, who we really are is the *chooser*.

You can choose the thoughts and feelings you want to have at any time, any place, regardless of the demands of the voices in your head. Certainly there are many powerful, programmed responses that you have to contend with and it can look like you don't have any choice. But who you really are has the potential to choose to think and feel whatever you want, as outrageous as that may sound.

People who are not familiar with the idea that you are the chooser will argue that what you think and feel just happens and you don't really have any choice about it. That is how it appears at first glance. It is a big step in awareness to realize that you have more control than you may have ever realized, and this is extremely useful in our mission to overcome call reluctance and the fear of self-promotion.

EXTENSIVE MEMORIES

We carry around endless memories of our own experience in the database of our mind. Some say that we also carry around the memories from past lives, if you believe in that sort of thing. A more scientific explanation of past lives is that we inherit the memories of our parents at the time of conception. Our parents also inherited the memories of their parents. That would mean that each one of us could have the memories of the thousands of people in our family tree dating back as far as you can imagine, passed on at the time of their conception. We may not get all the memories of each couple, but we get all the memories up until the time their child is conceived.

These memories are not in our conscious mind. We wouldn't know what to do with all that information. But some would say that all that information is in our subconscious mind.

The important thing to consider is that when you are afraid of something that is happening or could happen, you are not reacting to just one incident in present time. The way the ego works to protect us, it is more likely reacting to the memory of many similar past dangerous experiences, not just the one we

are currently facing. If you are reacting to many related fearful situations, your reaction is going to be much more intense.

Functionally, you have to find the courage in the face of danger in order to take action. I bring up these ideas here as potential explanations for the intensity of our fears or resistance.

When we make a prospecting call, what is the real danger? Physically there is no risk. Then why do we have so much fear about making the call? Why can the fear of dialing the phone have the intensity of a life or death situation? To our ego it may actually look like a life or death situation. So it is going to respond accordingly with everything it's got to keep us safe. Don't worry; there are ways to diffuse the fear whether you are dealing with one incident in your mind or many.

Fortunately the system works in reverse. If you can release yourself from the fear of the moment, you can release yourself from all the seemingly related fears as well. These are intriguing possible answers for why some of our fears are so intense in the face of what may be in this reality a minor, momentary discomfort or no real danger at all.

JUDGE AND EVALUATE: THE EGO'S JOB

Let's look more at how the ego protects us from present danger or perceived potential danger.

The main weapon in the ego's arsenal is judgment and evaluation. That is how the ego was created, by other people's judgment and evaluation. Did you ever notice that there is a voice in your head that is constantly judging and evaluating everything that is going on around you? Your ego would rather that you not know what its voice sounds like. If you learn to challenge or ignore the constant protective chattering of your ego, it becomes a much bigger challenge for your ego to control you in its mission to keep you safe.

Here's how it works. You get ready to make some prospecting calls or decide it's time to make a challenging call that you've been putting off. Your ego accesses all your memories in a split second. It reminds you of all the things that have gone wrong in the past or could go wrong now.

Sometimes you may only feel intense anxiety and not anything specific. As I mentioned, the ego is amazingly creative and cunning. It will throw everything at you it can dream up to keep you from taking action if it thinks the action you want to take is potentially dangerous to your survival or comfort level.

Below are some examples of what the ego might be saying to you as you get ready to dial. I started many of the phrases with "I." Your ego wants you to think that what it's telling you is the real you and these thoughts are totally logical reasons not to make the call(s).

- "I'm not ready to make these calls."
- "I'm not sure what to say to this person."
- "I don't have the right language to make these calls."
- "I can make these calls tomorrow. There are other more important and more immediate things to do."
- "This probably isn't the best time to make these calls."
- "This person probably doesn't need what I am offering."
- "This list of prospects isn't any good."
- "I need to come up with a better offer."
- "I would call these referrals, but then I would be out of referrals."
- "There has to be an easier way."

- “I think I will find a way to prospect besides using the phone.”
- “Maybe I can find a good book on how to overcome call reluctance.”
- “I’m feeling hungry. I think I’ll have an early lunch.”

The potential list of thoughts the ego will produce to either distract you or somehow keep you from dialing the phone (or anything that appears to be potentially dangerous) is endless.

We know that the ego is afraid that something bad might happen based on its collection of past experiences and it wants to protect us. Here is a partial list of the fears the ego is responding to:

- Fear of rejection or being negatively judged by others in some way
- Fear of failure or incompetence or being taken advantage of
- Fear of embarrassment or of being laughed at
- Fear of feeling stupid or inadequate
- Fear of being wrong or blindsided
- Fear of looking bad or looking like an idiot
- Fear of the unknown or of the unforeseen
- Fear of change, or of something new, or of success

If you attempted to include every possible thing you could be afraid of, the list is going to be a long one and different for each person. The good news is that dealing effectively with a few of the bigger fears takes care of the little ones.

FEAR AND PRESSURE

How are we taught to deal with fear and pressure? Our academic training from first grade to adult education teaches us to solve problems with analysis and linear logic. This approach is based on what is *observably true and provable* based on what appears to be the facts.

Life is much more complicated than this model because there are many powerful elements that cannot be seen. Consequently, the academic model doesn't work well with anything complicated or fast moving. The academic approach is good for adding a column of numbers where there is a narrow focus, no moving parts, and no rush. But when you add people to the equation, which adds a high level of complexity, the analytical approach is painfully slow, plodding, and prone to mistakes due to its limited perspective.

If the problem is more complicated than the analytical model can handle, you won't come up with an answer that will work and surely not in a short amount of time.

Albert Einstein said, "You can't solve the problem with the same paradigm that created the problem." You have to shift to a bigger perspective or bigger paradigm so you can see more. If you are lost, it can help to get to higher ground so you can see more of your surroundings. If you have a big enough perspective, you can effectively deal with a more complicated problem. Einstein knew how to shift to a bigger perspective and subsequently came up with solutions to some of the most complex questions of our physical world.

The most important thing to consider is that we are much more likely to be able to solve any problem if we shift to a bigger perspective.

Here are some examples of analytical solutions that sound good but don't help much.

- Just make more calls and your fear will go away.

- You can't care about what people think of you.
- You have to really believe in what you are selling (promoting).
- That person has your money in his wallet and your job is to get it.
- If what you are selling is worthwhile, everyone should want it!

There is some truth to these statements, but because the analytical focus is so narrow, these well-meant suggestions don't do much to inspire you to prospect if you are feeling some resistance. You need more horsepower; you need a much bigger perspective.

A fascinating thing happens when you combine the analytical approach with the ego. It creates a righteousness about the information the ego has collected about how life works.

Remember, the ego is naturally overly dramatic—everything is a life or death issue. It's all about survival, avoiding risk, avoiding discomfort, and staying safe. Further manifestations of the ego and its desire to be right about its information bring in a desire to control everything or even dominate. The ego will do everything it can to make sure it gets its way. If pushed, the ego doesn't care about anyone else, only its survival, which also means it has to be right. If you argue with the ego about how it thinks life works based on the information it has collected (true or false), you are in for a major battle with a highly skilled opponent.

Furthermore, your analytical ego is obsessed with doing everything perfectly or exactly the way it should be done to fit the information it has collected. It then constantly judges and evaluates how you're doing in relation to its library of past experiences.

The analytical ego assumes that if you are doing it correctly, everyone will say yes or everyone will buy. If what you do or

the action you take doesn't work somehow, you must have done something wrong. So now your own ego, which is trying to protect you but has a limited view of reality, is making *you* the reason its brilliant information didn't work. You did it wrong! This, of course, makes you go back to the drawing board to figure out what went wrong. Victory again for the ego. *Remember, to the ego, it has succeeded if it can keep you off the phone trying to figure out what went wrong.*

So now you are getting ready to make a prospecting call. You are scared about what could happen based on memories of past negative experiences. You are now also afraid that you may do it wrong and really screw things up. Your dedicated ego is going to do everything it can to keep you off the phone in order to avoid the perceived danger, and it is willing to fight ferociously to do it. Most people have no idea what they are up against when they decide to take a sales job or try to promote something, anything.

The ego's obsession with constantly judging and evaluating how we are doing against its notes on how things are supposed to work creates another titanic problem. We negatively judge the process of prospecting, which makes us want to stop and try to fix what's wrong.

YOUR EGO'S APTITUDE

Another formidable aptitude of the ego is its ability to make things up that sound true based on a tiny bit of information. Your ego can enlist the help of your analytical mind and your imagination, then look at a person's address and, based on the neighborhood they live in, make all kinds of logical assumptions. You will have thoughts floating into mind like "Since they live in a nice neighborhood, they must have money. Since they have money, they must be smart. Since they are smart, they probably already have a financial advisor [or fill in the blank with any product or service]. I guess there's no reason to call them."

Does the ego actually know for a fact that any of this information is true about this person? No. Is it possible that the ego's assumptions are totally wrong? Yes.

One thing you will learn if you haven't already is that when you phone a prospect, you have no idea how the call is going to go, regardless of what your ego has told you. If you have never met the person you are calling, your ego has no clue about what the conversation will be, but it will make you think it does in order to keep you from making the call!

Remember, if your ego has decided that making prospecting calls is potentially dangerous, it has to find a reason not to make the call. Then it has done its job to protect you. Obviously, not making any prospecting calls is going to cause you to be short on money, so is that really protection in the long run? Unfortunately, the ego doesn't think that far into the future. The most important thing to the ego is to get rid of the immediate threat. It will worry about the bigger problems later.

I was traveling along the East Coast one summer with some friends when I was in college. We were momentarily excited to come across a bar that had a big sign out in front that said: *FREE BEER TOMORROW*. Our analytical egos were momentarily looking forward to the free beer tomorrow.

Then we shifted to a bigger perspective and realized there would be no free beer because in this case, tomorrow never comes. The ego likes to push off the bigger problems until tomorrow so it can deal with the immediate problems of right now. In this way, the ego never gets around to dealing with the real problems until it's too late.

The ego has plenty of positive qualities. It keeps us alive and breathing. It protects us and fights for us in many ways. The ego makes us fight to survive. It fights for what we believe in to a certain extent. Of course, your ego is going to be more excited about fighting for what *it* believes in based on its programming and experiences. If you decide to pursue a path

that could be dangerous, your ego is going to let you know it is having second thoughts, and that can be a good thing.

But here is the big problem presented by the ego. It is the source of most of our suffering. If we are not aware of how the ego can get in our way, we can end up letting a tiny, myopic, overprotective, scared part of our psyche keep us from getting what we want in life. When it comes to overcoming call reluctance and the fear of self-promotion, the ego is in way over its head and has no idea how to deal with the problem other than to do what it has always done: make the threat go away by not prospecting!

The ego actually *is* the problem and you can't get rid of your ego. It is a permanent part of who you are. The problem can be solved, but I hope you are starting to see it's going to take some skill to outsmart the wily ego.

– THE NEGATIVE SPIRAL –

You are dialing the phone and noticing that your ego is negatively judging the prospecting process, which makes you doubt what you are doing and how you are doing it. For example, if you make a call and someone says, “No, they are not interested.” To the analytical ego, this is not possible. We must be doing something wrong. We have a product that everyone should want. How is it possible that someone could say no? If you get three no's, in a row, the analytical ego will start to make you think that maybe this isn't as good of a deal as you may have thought.

When you negatively judge something, it creates a negative vision of what is happening or of what could happen. Once you have created a negative vision, the ego has reason to doubt or fear and the alarms go off. Protection is needed to make sure that the organism survives. That protection usually manifests itself in the form of avoiding any further action (no more prospecting) until you can eliminate the risk or take the potential for discomfort away.

Once you have allowed a negative vision to creep into your awareness, all kinds of other negative visions can enter. You will question whether you have the right phone approach. You start to consider that people are not actually interested in the product or service you are offering and that maybe you need to represent a different product. It doesn't take long before the doubt you are feeling about what you are doing for a living will stop you from prospecting altogether. You may consider that you need to change jobs and do something different.

Your analytical ego wants to either fix what is wrong with what you are currently doing or find another way to prospect. Either way, the net result is that you stop prospecting, which solves the short-term problem for the ego: to get rid of the fear, the risk, the discomfort, the worry, the anxiety. Then the ego has done its job to protect you from the immediate danger.

The bigger problem is that you are left with major doubt about everything related to prospecting. If there is doubt or fear, your resistance to prospecting is going to be strong and you will find something else to do.

In my several decades as a sales performance coach, I have seen this negative judging of the prospecting process stop successful salespeople dead in their tracks. It can start with a major negative event in their life: a failure of some kind, financial pressure, a divorce, sickness, injury—anything that can take a person's confidence away and make them hesitant or afraid to take risks.

When people are faced with highly negative situations, they project possible negative outcomes into the future and then become extremely cautious. Since prospecting requires an element of risk, the willingness to prospect either slows way down or stops altogether. Once the prospecting stops, so does new income, which usually means the problems and complications continue to escalate.

I have seen many people wait until their back is against the wall and then have an intense flurry of prospecting activity

until they get enough money coming in to take the pressure off. Then they go back to putting off prospecting for as long as possible. I did that myself for many years. It's no fun. It's a debilitating and demeaning feeling not to have the income you are capable of earning.

If you are negatively judging making calls or any part of the prospecting process, you will never make enough calls to make it work without some major luck. Even if you are lucky once in a while, you will eventually find that not making enough calls means you are going to struggle to make enough sales.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



SIDNEY C. WALKER

Sid Walker is a pioneer, an innovator, and a seeker of empowering solutions to the challenges we face in sales and communication.

As an executive outplacement coach, Sid had several Fortune 500 clients by age twenty-eight. Hearing a call to expand his coaching skills, Sid found *New York Times* best-selling author Dr. Cherie Carter Scott, who is considered the mother of coaching. Sid was certified as a coach by her training company, Motivation Management Service (theMMS.com), in 1982.

In 1988, Sid wrote his first book, *Trusting Yourself* (updated to *Trust Your Gut* in 2004). He then focused on the financial services industry as a coach. Sid has coached more than 2,000 advisors. He is the founder of SellingWithoutWrestling.com, an extensive training site for advisors who are advocates of the

low-key or no sales pressure approach. A large percentage of Sid's coaching clients have become sales production leaders in their respective fields.

Sid has written a collection of nonfiction softcover books, ebooks, and hundreds of articles. His best-selling book is *How to Double Your Sales by Asking a Few More Questions*.

After rising to the leadership level of many contemporary training programs and thousands of hours as a sales performance coach to many talented and gifted people, Sid found the message he wants to share. Teach entrepreneurs, business owners, and salespeople how to move away from the restrictions of the selfish, limited ego and develop a stronger relationship with their boundless, intuitive spirit. The plan is to continue to coach, speak, and write books on this topic.

Sid currently has an individual coaching practice and does periodic tele-webinars and limited speaking engagements. For current contact info, go to:

www.SidWalker.com

HIRE SID AS YOUR COACH

Dear Reader,

I like to tell people you don't need to hire a coach. You will eventually figure out how to succeed as long as you don't quit. The reason you hire a coach is to speed up the process. I can cut years off the learning curve and have saved a lot of careers by helping people increase their sales within a few weeks.

My specialty is financial advisors primarily because they have one of the most challenging sales jobs. When you are selling intangible products like investments and life insurance, the product doesn't sell itself because it's usually just a piece of paper. You have to trust the advisor. I am an expert on how to create a meaningful level of trust in the first interview.

My clients include financial advisors, coaches, consultants, product reps, MLM, entrepreneurs, business owners, inventors, professionals, career changers, and retiring professional athletes.

I'm a champion of the low-key approach, which is to help your client figure out what they want and then help them get it without sales pressure. I have created a lot of millionaires who lead their companies in sales and don't use any sales techniques whatsoever!

If you want to explore the possibility of working together, send me an email with your contact info so we can set up a time to talk. We can get to know each other a little and see if we might be a good match for a coaching project.

Kind regards,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sid' with a flourish.

Sid@SidWalker.com