

Working through Frustration

Written by Steve Marr

Tuesday, 02 August 2016 05:14

Most of us get frustrated when we hit a barrier of some type. One of the most important attributes of an effective leader is to develop the ability to work through frustration rather than allow circumstances to block the path. I don't like frustration any more than another person. However, I experienced a life event that forced me to decide how I would deal with frustration. When I was six I injured my right arm and severed an artery, muscles, tendons and nerves. My father was home and because of his military training, he was able to stop the bleeding. He saved my life, but my arm was irreparably damaged. Fortunately, I have some use of my right arm and hand, but there was significant permanent damage. As a result I've never been able to use a typewriter or keyboard with both hands. I've needed to learn how to type with my left hand on a keyboard. Lately, I've turned to voice software to improve my writing speed.

I have always had an interest in writing. My first published article appeared in 1970, typed one-handed. Since my hands don't move over the keyboard as easily as with two hands, I tend to make typos and mistakes requiring more time to check my work. While at times this whole experience has been frustrating, I had to work through these circumstances or give up writing in today's environment of communicating through email.

When I was younger my dad would tell me to do something and my frequent response was "I'll try." He quickly countered by saying, "You won't try; you will do this." For example, my father expected me to cut the grass each week. When it rained, it made the grass difficult to handle. The old lawnmower would clog with heavy, wet grass. This made the process longer and more frustrating. However, I knew I had little choice but to work through my frustration and cut the grass on schedule.

We all face frustrations of different kinds. The key is to develop the ability to overcome these frustrations. Otherwise, we simply get stuck and fail to make progress.

Anyone in sales knows that you need to work through your frustrations when you receive "no" after "no" after "no." You may need to improve your sales approach and do a better job of targeting prospects, but the bottom line is to work through the frustration of receiving "no" or you'll never close a sale.

When you encounter an operational glitch that affects the quality of your product, the issue may not be readily apparent. You may try five or six different solutions to no avail. However, if you want to fix the problem; you need to work through the challenge to find the fix. If you allow frustration to get the better of you, the problem remains and quality suffers. You will lose customers when you don't work through your frustration.

Some frustrations aren't worth working through, but can be managed in different ways. For example, I'm not adept with technology implementation. I usually hire other more capable people to help me in this area. Also, I don't particularly enjoy doing my income taxes so I delegate this to my CPA. If I had no choice, I could work through my frustration to learn the

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technical issues involved with my taxes, although it would affect my productivity.

Jesus said "Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?" (Luke 15:8, NIV) We should all copy this excellent example of diligently working through frustration.

Learn to work through your frustrations. Learn when to delegate specific challenges. If you do, you will see significant improvement in your work.

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