

Mental Toughness

By Mike Stewart, CSP



Much has been written about goals and focus. It is a fact that deeply desired goals are great motivators. It is also true that heavy hitters know the importance of watching the ball and keeping their eyes on the prize.

In sales, this means:

***"The main thing is keeping the main thing the main thing,
and the main thing is selling new business."***

- Mike Stewart

This simple thought is one of the most important principles I teach, and I've shared it with hundreds of sales managers, and thousands of salespeople.

While this is critical to the formula for success, it is much easier said than done. Lots of other issues get in the way. For salespeople it may be providing, handling, seeing to, attending, taking care of, or looking into matters pertaining to:

- Service
- Marketing
- Credit
- Meetings
- Joint calls
- Training
- Production
- Ordering
- Delivery
- Management's priority of the month
- The boss' crisis d' jour

...and the list goes on. And on and on and on!

Each of us has our own list of issues and matters that get in the way of our success. They distract us, redirect us, confuse us, anger us, and almost always de-motivate us.

But, those who like to make excuses and blame others for their shortcomings are always quick to point out that their failure to perform is not their fault. They readily claim their failure came about because someone else:

- Complicated things
- Created conflicting priorities

- Did a poor job of planning, directing, and coordinating

It is true that others who are involved with us and our work complicate things, create conflict and fall short in their own performance. These problems without a doubt affect our performance in a negative way.

Please take note that these same problems affect others on the team who still manage to succeed in spite of these problems.

"Success, more often than not, is directly related to our ability to tolerate complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty."

- Mike Stewart

You will never escape the complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty foisted upon you by others. These obstacles will always be with you.

If complexity, ambiguity, and the shortcomings of others are problematic for you, it is simply up to you to realize this fact and decide whether you are going to use them as excuses or make up your mind to work around them, maintain your focus, and achieve your goals.

Look around you. You haven't been singled out. Others, faced with these same complexities, ambiguities and letdowns manage to get their jobs done. In fact, there are some who not only get their jobs done, but excel and produce outstanding results!

To find out how they do it,

- Buy their lunch and ask them how they do it
- Talk to them on the phone, or via email, about it
- Request this topic on the agenda of your next meeting
- Talk to your boss. Hopefully, he will be more than willing to share what he knows others are doing. He may not even be aware of the problems and maybe he will take action to help eliminate them!

Be mentally tough by thinking about achieving your goals and never allowing yourself to think about the negatives. Think about what you can do to find ways to get things done, not about the reasons things can't be done.

Make yourself part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Above all:

1. Publicly accept accountability for your own goals, and
2. Look out! Misery loves company. Be ever watchful.

Whatever you do, under NO circumstances should you talk to or spend time with people in your organization who are whiners,

blamers, and complainers, and who use these problems as excuses for their own failures.

Stay as far away from these people as possible. They will poison you and drag you down to their level if you give them half the chance.

"You'll never be a hotdog if you think like a weenie."
- Mike Stewart

Stick with it and spend your time with winners and others who reinforce your belief in yourself and help you achieve your goals.

In a more colloquial expression of the results to be gained from sticking with it, Comedian Dave Gardner, paraphrasing industrialist B C. Forbes, said,

"A diamond ain't nothing but a lump of coal that stuck with it!"

Stick with it and be a winner!

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