

## No Vampires

By Mike Stewart, CSP

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Be watchful and careful.

### **Don't let the vampires suck you dry!**

In the wake of hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans, I have shelved the Booster I had prepared for this issue and decided to caution you about vampires.

***When was the last time you stopped to appreciate  
a good sunset? Oh, yeah, that's right.  
You were born a vampire.  
- Frost***

The fact that Anne Rice, author of The Vampire Chronicles, is from New Orleans, came to my mind during this tragedy. The television scenes of wholesale looting by the social vampires who reside in the Crescent City, my second home, added to my strong feelings about this topic.

**The Big Easy is very Uneasy right now**, and is being decimated by more than the flood waters from Lake Pontchartrain. This beautiful city is being victimized and looted by the social vampires who have come out of the chaos to attack her in her time of peril.

**Every one of us**, while not helpless in the face of the vampires in our own lives, are usually very vulnerable to their assaults.

**Who are these vampires?** They are the people who take advantage of us and pull us down. Drop by drop, they take our generosity and use it to their own advantage with little or no credit to us. Even worse, they drain us of our feelings of self-worth and self esteem by dragging us down to the lower reaches of performance they habitually inhabit.

**They are the people who are fault-finders**, whiners, blamers, and under-achievers. They spend more time and energy finding "reasons" something won't work than it would take to find a way to make it work. They constantly make excuses for failure instead of taking the positive actions necessary to succeed.

**These predatory vampires will suck you dry** of ambition, confidence, commitment and perseverance if you choose to let them do so.

**You are vulnerable only because you choose to be.**

***In the long run we shape our lives,  
and we shape ourselves...the choices  
we make are ultimately our own responsibility.***

– Eleanor Roosevelt

**The key word here is Choice.** When faced with these predatory people you must choose either to not allow them to influence you, or become a victim yourself.

**Choose wisely.**

- 1. Identify the vampires in your life who are continually trying to drag you down, and**
- 2. Avoid them at all costs. No exceptions. No excuses. No guilt or remorse.**

**Do not be concerned with their so called friendship.** Please always remember: the people around you either support your goals and build you up or they discourage you and try to bring you down. Anyone who is not encouraging you and building you up is not your friend. Period.

**There are positive courageous people in every situation,** no matter how awful it may be. Current examples are the leaders and many citizens in New Orleans and Gulfport, Mississippi, my hometown. Despite the devastation, these people are looking to the future and planning to build the Gulf Coast back better than ever.

***Our environment, the world in which we live  
and work, is no more than a mirror of our  
attitudes and expectations.***

– Earl Nightingale

**There are positive people in your life** who are courageous enough to risk being unpopular in order to achieve their goals, and support others in the pursuit of their own. Seek these people out and choose to allow them to encourage and support you.

**Be a positive thinker, yourself,** and support the goals of others who will support you in return. You, and those you help, will...

**Become the best you can be.**

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International sales trainer and consultant, Mike Stewart, CSP, specializes in hiring and developing high-performance sales teams. He is a leading authority in diagnosing and overcoming Sales Call Reluctance. To learn more about Mike and the services and products his company offers, go to [www.StewartSalesDynamics.com](http://www.StewartSalesDynamics.com).

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If you are a member of the media and would like to interview Mike or feature more of his articles in your publication, please contact him at [Mike@StewartSalesDynamics.com](mailto:Mike@StewartSalesDynamics.com) or 1-866-515-0022.