

Take Out the Trash

Is your head trash piling up?

The term “head trash” came up during a conversation with a colleague and he used the phrase to describe the mental garbage that affects the performance of most sales people. Head trash is a collection of limiting thoughts or ideas that prevent you from taking specific action that will help you generate better results. Here are a few examples of how head trash can affect you.

In a sales training workshop I conducted for a specialty retailer, several people stated that they didn’t bother trying to close any business before 11:00 AM because they “knew” that everyone who came into their store before that time was just comparing their price with one of their competitors located close by. A sales person in a manufacturing company told me that her customers would not pay full price for her products because a major competitor sold similar products for less money. As a result, she consistently offered her customers a discount even before they asked. Another sales rep confided that he believed that the lowest possible price was the only thing his customers wanted from him and his company. He had held this belief for so long that nothing could dissuade him from this line of thinking.

Head trash can affect you in different ways. During a morning workout I caught myself thinking that I could not complete a particular exercise and this self-limiting thought prevented me from continuing. Yet, on most other days, I breezed through the workout with much less strain and effort. From a sales perspective, if you believe that a prospect will not be receptive to a new product, idea or solution, your ability to present that idea in a positive manner is greatly reduced. I have seen sales people talk to customers at great length and at the end of their conversation ask, “You don’t want to order this do you?” They have convinced themselves even before they ask for the sale that the customer will not be interested.

The cause of head trash varies. Extreme fatigue from lack of sleep or illness is one common cause because your physical well-being contributes to a less-than-optimistic outlook or mindset. Another cause is associating with negative-minded people. I once worked with an individual who always saw the glass as half-empty instead of half-full and after even a brief conversation with him, I always felt drained and pessimistic.

The most common cause of head trash is the experience you have had with a particular task or assignment. For example, you may be required to cold call to generate new leads and prospect. However, if your experience with cold calling has not been positive and you have failed to find qualified leads then picking up the telephone will be a grind and you certainly will not enjoy making the calls. And, when you do eventually pick up the telephone, your

tone will not convey the desired message to your prospect.

To achieve the results you deserve and are capable of it is essential that you dump your head trash. While this is easier said than done, applying a few techniques will help.

First, focus on what you CAN do. With a positive outcome. Instead of thinking of the negative aspect of the task, concentrate on the best possible outcome. Let’s return to the cold calling example for a moment. If you put yourself into the mindset that making these calls will generate new business, or at the very least, that they will help you connect with new and interesting people, your willingness to invest in this task will dramatically improve.

Next, take action immediately. Most people procrastinate when head trash invades their thinking and this prevents them from moving forward. However, taking one step or small action supersedes the desire to remain complacent. I believe it was Confucius who said, “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.” I have learned from experience that making a difficult telephone call eliminates the need to procrastinate and stimulates my desire to take further action throughout the day. And, as I continue to take action, the trash that may have collected in my head is emptied.

It is also important to associate with action-oriented people who support your goals and objectives. I start the week by talking to a good friend of mine every Monday morning. During our conversations we discuss the challenges from the previous week and explore options and ideas. I also belong to a Mastermind group and when we meet each month, we help each other look for new opportunities within our respective businesses. All of these conversations help eliminate my head trash and motivate me to try new approaches and apply different ideas.

Take out your trash and watch the difference in your results.

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