

The Naked Truth About Selling

It's not about the cookies.

At the office of one of my clients, two girls had the opportunity to sell the famous Girl Scout Cookies®. One posted an order form by the coffee machine in the break room and hoped people would read the form, sign it, and buy the cookies. The other girl, dressed in her Girl Scout uniform, went office to office and spoke individually to all the employees.

The passive seller sold four boxes of cookies. The active seller sold 250 boxes. It's not about the cookies. It's about the process. And it's all about creating trust.

When others trust you, they want to continue to do business with you and buy from you — whether you're selling a product, service, or community initiative.

So begins my second book, "The Naked Truth about Selling." This book, like its companion publication, "The Naked Truth about Giving Great Speeches," does not expose you to a tome of facts and theories. Rather, you try on new ways to establish trust and build vital relationships. In this book, I have stripped your learning curve down to useable strategies guaranteed to help you speak for yourself. Enjoy this excerpt.

Chapter One: Stripping Away Self-Sabotaging Behavior

In a magazine cartoon from *The New Yorker*, four people waited for their luggage at an airport baggage claim area. Over a caption that read, "Here's the baggage you'll never lose," they grabbed their respective suitcases with these labels attached: "Never forgave my mother for discontinuing ballet classes in second grade," "Hate my child for being just like me," "Jealous of my brother for being more successful," and "I grew up poor so I can never feel financially secure." Each bag was labeled with injuries, injustices, and grudges that they're all — *we're* all — carrying around wherever we go.

As difficult as it may be to examine your baggage, you will be more effective as a communicator by understanding what is in your bags, and how your "stuff" influences the way you present yourself.

When I was in high school, a popular boys' group selected me as their Sweetheart for one year. As a seventh-grade social outcast transposed into an 11th-grade Sweetheart, I loved every minute of my term. Then, I moved on.

Mary, one of the five Sweetheart nominees, never seemed to regroup. Twenty-five years after my reign as Sweetheart, she introduced me to her child by saying, "Annie, this is Mrs. Reisman — the one who beat Mommy as Sweetheart." Mary's husband once told me, "Karen, Mary adores you, but she'll like you even more after you're dead." They both insisted they were

joking. What do you think? Is Mary carrying around this bag that reads, "I'm not a winner"? Does this thought affect her actions and behavior now? The truest things are often said in jest.

I kept thinking, "Poor Mary," until I realized that all of us have baggage. Whatever roles we take on create labels. She caused me to examine my own luggage, and I discovered the "high school valedictorian" hanging bag.

I wanted to be my high school valedictorian. I graduated first in my class but did not get this honor. Later, I discovered the culprit — a "B" I received in home economics as a result of lumpy, peaked, blueberry muffins that leaned to the left!

Karen Cortell Reisman, MS

Reisman, author of two books, speaks about Einstein, her cousin, in a one-woman show, "Letters From Einstein," intertwining personal letters from Einstein in a message about how to thrive in this crazy world. She also speaks about how to Speak For Yourself® so others listen and trust you. To buy her books or purchase other learning tools, go to www.LettersFromEinstein.com or www.SpeakForYourself.com.



This bag called “Trying to be perfect” still follows me around at times.

What are some of the things you’re still angry or troubled about? Mary and I are not the only ones who have a hard time forgetting old issues. What baggage do you have that you’d like to lose?

In your professional world, you might be lingering over the minimal raise, the loss of a promotion, the prestigious assignment you did not get, or the subtle lack of inclusion on the golf course. All of these bags can cause self-defeating behavior when allowed to fester.

Or, are you rolling your bags all the way back from your childhood? A client wanted some help with how to tell his patients that he was moving his office to a new location. I was puzzled by this request. Without trying to sound simplistic, I said, “Send a nice card or letter telling everyone the new address.”

Heresponded, “I’m concerned with the opulence issue. My patients might say, ‘Dr. Smith, I bet all the work you’ve done on me is paying for your fancy new reception area!’”

I realized that his issue was not about communicating the new location. His obstacle was feeling comfortable with his level of success. I asked him, “Did you grow up without a lot of money?”

“Well, I’m one of eight children,” he replied. “We had a nice life, but it was always a struggle. In fact, my parents tend to negate people who have a certain amount of money.”

“Is your new office opulent?” I asked.

“No,” he replied.

“Good,” I continued. “Patients may get the wrong idea if your waiting room is gilded in gold. But I bet they would be more bothered if your office was substandard in appearance.”

I suggested, “Revisit how your parents’ attitudes about money affect you. Think about how that causes you to feel conflicted with your monetary success. Then, consider how this impedes your ability to communicate your success with comfort.”

To speak to sell, you need to examine your luggage content, figure out how to grow from the experiences, and move on without dragging around multiple bags. This extra baggage will sabotage your ability to communicate with power.

I finally had a chance to talk to Mary, my fellow Sweetheart nominee.

After 30 years, I was tired of hearing about my

victory and her loss. I said, “You are a winner as a professional, parent, community volunteer, and spouse. A long time ago, 35 teenage boys with pimples didn’t pick you as Sweetheart, and it’s been bothering you ever since.” She listened, and we talked. She discarded this suitcase.

Here’s how to strip away your baggage:

□ Draw a few suitcases on a clean sheet of paper. (You don’t have to be an artist!)

□ Write down a piece of your baggage in each of the suitcases/squares. Look at them.

□ Think about communication obstacles challenging you now. Ask yourself if these issues relate to old bags you’ve been carrying around for a while. Identify the hurts from your past. Look at these bags and try to laugh. Brainstorm ways to retire these challenges. This will help lighten your load.

□ Ask yourself these questions for the bags that persist:

- What’s your baggage that you’ll never lose?
 - How can you turn that baggage into something that’s meaningful to you, funny to others, or helpful to someone else in pain?
- What do the contents of these bags reveal about you?
- Are they things you can do over or change? If so, go for it. It’s never too late. ■

Source: *Rabbi Liza Stern*

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