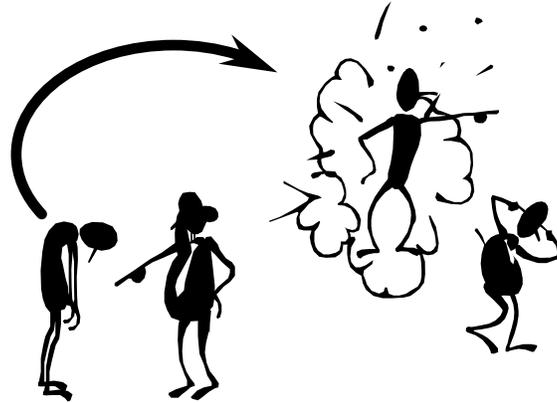




The Discount-Revenge Phenomenon



Picture this: Sales person is meeting with her client. The client tells her about the issue he needs to solve, and his goals for his business. The sales person says, *“Thanks for sharing your concerns with me. I really appreciate knowing what’s going on. Now let me tell you about how my product will work for you.”*

The client kind of shuts down as the sales person goes on to explain her product, the features that make it special, and the benefits of using it and doing business with her. The sales person senses the shut down, but can’t figure out why so she presses on extolling the virtues of her product and services.

Wait a minute! Did you say the client kind of shut down? How come? A moment ago he was telling her about his issues; now he’s checked out of the conversation. What happened?

Let's look a little closer. The client extended trust to the sales person in discussing the challenges and goals of his business. The sales person responded with a polite, perfunctory thank you, and proceeded to do her sales thing. Unwittingly, she effectively terminated the discussion of the client's issues. She didn't probe to understand more; she didn't paraphrase to indicate her understanding. She did go into sales mode.

What happened here is all too common. We call it **Discount**. By only perfunctorily acknowledging the client's situation, the sales person discounted the client by disregarding the client's issues — unintentionally, but she did so just the same.

Here's the rub: When someone is discounted, they almost always take some form of **Revenge**. It's human to do so — our brains are literally wired to get back at someone who puts us down. The revenge can take countless forms: Shutting down; arguing; discounting in return; walking out; making fun of; ignoring; doing something that makes the other person look bad; slowing down pace of work; quitting their job; trying to gain power over; negative gossip behind someone's back, etc. Humans are wonderfully imaginative and creative in finding ways to even the score. (Sometimes people take their revenge out on a safe target — maybe it's at home, or with close friends.)

In our case, the client's revenge was not only to shut down, but also to not do business with this sales person. Sales person walks away from lost

sale thinking, *“I can’t understand why I didn’t get that sale. Our product was a perfect fit. I did a good job explaining how it works. Hmmm, maybe it was some sort of political issue in his company...”* Client walks away thinking, *“She was a waste of time. Here I told her my problems and all she could talk about was her products. I think I dodged a bullet not doing business with her. She just doesn’t listen; I bet she would have been lousy at support.”*

This cycle is called **Discount-Revenge**. You can imagine how it can play out in all sorts of situations — one person is discounted; the other takes revenge; which in turn discounts the first person, who then takes revenge — and so the dance of the discount-revenge spiral begins.

Here’s the key to understanding **Discount-Revenge**: The discount is **as perceived by the person who feels the discount**. The other person may be totally unaware that a discount took place. As a result, from time to time we all discount one another unintentionally — and we may never know that it happened. We may feel the revenge when someone goes quiet, or gets defensive or angry, but we’ll probably be wondering, *“Where did that come from?”*

Research has shown that it takes 3 to 5 positive’s to overcome one negative (perceived discount). Apparently, our brains do keep score. Now we can understand how bad feelings can pile up between people until the ultimate revenge happens — one of them ends the relationship.

Important: Discounting between people is the primary cause of damage in relationships because it causes defensiveness. This is one concept you need to always be aware of in your relationships — business or personal. If the scales tip too much to the negative, a relationship cannot be sustained. If one person is always up and one is kept down, a relationship cannot be sustained.

Since we aren't always aware of discounting others, it's just plain smart to focus on the positives as much as is authentically possible — keep that score tallied in your favor. It's difficult to climb out of a hole of repeated discounts, intentional or not.