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“Accept it, Dude... She’s NOT Gonna’ Call.”

by Keith F. Luscher
Author, *Prospect & Flourish*

This past weekend, those of us living here in Columbus, Ohio enjoyed our first Saturday of real spring weather. This also meant that if you went outside that morning, the familiar sound of lawnmowers could be heard on every block—unless you were within an earshot of my house.

Instead, what you would have heard was Jacob, my 16-year-old son pulling the lawnmower cord...and of an engine that wouldn’t start. While I didn’t count how many times he had pulled that cord, I would say he stayed at it for a good five minutes. Then he called me.

I went out, and checked the oil, gas and fuel pump (as Jacob said “I already did all that...” in a frustrated tone). I took the handle of the pull cord, and gave it my best shot. It turned right over and started up (as I proceeded to act unsurprised). After a few brief coughs—not untypical for the first engine start of the season—my 20-year-old Craftsman lawnmower was purring like a kitten.

Fast forward to Monday afternoon, in the Dublin, Ohio offices of Principal Financial Group. I’m sitting at my desk writing up some notes from a meeting when I overhear Ray, one of our newer agents tell a more senior colleague: “I’m having a hard time getting these people to call me back.”

One of the things I have admired so much about Ray has been his tenacity with the telephone. It’s what also compelled me to go up to him, gently put my hand on his shoulder, and say: “Accept it, dude. She’s not gonna call.” Someone had to break it to him.

To be fair, I’m not sure if Ray was making cold calls or warm calls, but it really did not matter. Ninety-five percent of the time the prospect will NOT call you back—even if they have a genuine interest in meeting with you. *The ball will always remain in your court.*

Yet, most of the time sales professionals don’t get appointments because they give up too quickly. After two or three messages, they quit and move on. I will say here as I have said before...*follow up until.* Learn the art of gentle persistence.

This leads us back to the lawnmower. Recall that my son Jacob (who is the high school jock that I never was!) tried for a good five minutes and several attempts at the pull cord to get that lawnmower started. He tried and tried, with no success. Before long, he calls out his old man to give it a shot. I start it up with a single pull.

Does this mean that this 42-year-old heart attack survivor is stronger than his weight-lifting 16-year-old son (who excels in both football and baseball)? That’s a question I would prefer to leave rhetorical. Rather, what it does mean is that if Jacob had, instead of calling me out, *attempted just one more try*, and not given up, he would have started the lawnmower on his own.

When I came out and made that single pull, most of the work had been done for me. With every pull of that cord, Jacob had brought the engine one step closer to turning over. All it would have taken was a little more tenacity—a little more faith.

And so it goes with the phone and setting appointments, and anything else for that matter. Accepting that “she’s not gonna call,” is not a lack of faith—it is simply an acceptance that it is *your* responsibility not to give up—if you truly believe in what you offer.

And it is also realizing that true faith pays off when it is placed first within yourself.