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## Folks, If YOU Can't Say Something Nice...

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

We have all heard the expression, if you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all. It's a timeless rule, yet one that is often ignored. The fact is, when you say something negative about another person, you only make yourself look bad—plus you spread bad karma (remember that what goes around...). You hurt yourself professionally, and you hurt yourself spiritually (this is the case whether you believe in that or not).

Here is a simple example from social media: when I publish a new article on Prospecting Weekly, I will post it to the news boards of many groups on LinkedIn. That way, it gets plenty of exposure, brings in new readers and helps more people.

You can make comments to these various articles—and most of the time the comments will be positive, either affirming what I shared, or giving an additional example of my point. But every now and then, there will be a critic.

The problem is that the world has enough critics. So, what is a “critic?” For our example, a critic is someone who makes negative remarks without anything better or positive to offer up. Being critical is bad. Offering constructive criticism is good, and is completely different.

Stephen Covey gets into this when he stresses the principle of “loyalty to the absent.” If you are to say something critical, say it constructively, with respect, and in a manner as though that person were present. When it is online through Facebook or LinkedIn, that person is always present...as are many others.

Let's say you read one of my articles that emphasizes the value of calling people back persistently until you get, as I sometimes say in jest, “...get a restraining order.”

Alas, you disagree. Your experience from being on both the phoning and the receiving end indicates that if a prospect does not return a call after the 47th voice mail message, the one doing the phoning should give it up and move on. You likely have a good point to share from your experience. How do you handle it? Here I am writing and sounding like a know-it-all when you definitely know better.

You can approach it two ways ....

*Keith's article “Follow Up Until...The Art of Gentle Persistence,” is very misleading to struggling sales people. My 35 years of experience tells me that if people don't want to talk to you, they won't call you. There is no reason for you to waste your time if they have not taken or returned your call by the third or fourth attempt..*

Well, that's helpful. In essence, the post above says to just give up! Yet, perhaps there are situations where one should simply move on and stop making calls to people who won't return them. Why not speak to your own experience or industry?

*Keith's article, “Follow Up Until...The Art of Gentle Persistence,” makes some valid points as to the importance of not giving up. Quite often, you just really never know if a prospect is truly interested until you receive a clear answer. However, my experience also tells me that in some professions or industries, one's time as a sales producer might better be invested in other prospects who are more responsive. There is no shortage of people out there who need—and want—our assistance. When prioritizing your calls, wouldn't you rather attempt to help people who are at least willing to help themselves?*

Wow. I think you just swayed my mind in that last post. Good job! Plus, it was constructive and provided value for everyone, instead of just being a critic attempting to one-up me. From an ego standpoint, I might still have been quietly miffed at the post above (depending on my level of insecurity that day), but you also began a constructive dialog to which others may feel compelled to respond. The sharing of ideas, and doing so with respect, is what we are all attempting to do through social media.

And if we were friends on Facebook, I might just send you a drink rather than throw a snowball at you.