

# Sales Tip!



## When Under Attack, Fall Back

**Has this ever happened to you? You're in the middle of a discussion with a prospect, and suddenly you're caught flat-footed by what seems like an attack.**

Maybe the prospect says, "You obviously don't know a whole lot about our industry." Or: "This presentation has no relevance to what you and I talked about." Or maybe you pick up a sudden, distinctly negative body language signal, like the prospect shaking his head slowly back and forth.

And then what happens? You fight back. Without much thought, and driven by barely suppressed emotion, you react immediately.

Perhaps you say, "On the contrary, I did a lot of in-depth research on your industry." Or: "Actually, I took very detailed notes during our previous conversation, and this presentation is based exclusively on those notes. Here, I can show you." Or: "What's that supposed to mean?"

These are all emotional reactions. No matter how "right" you may happen to be in your instant rebuttal, it's a good bet that you will lose the sale, and damage the relationship, by reacting in this way.

**So here's the question. What's really happening here?**

In order to understand that, you need to understand that people operate out of three Ego States: a nurturing or critical Parent, a detached Adult, and an emotional Child. This is how we are wired. When your prospect made that comment or sent that negative body language signal, he was, in all likelihood, responding from the Child Ego State.

While it's important to avoid triggering negative Child responses from your prospects, it's even more important to suppress your own Child reactions to the things your prospects say or do!

The next time you get this kind of feedback from a prospect, step back and make a conscious effort to leave your own Child out of the discussion. **When you are under attack, fall back!**

The best way to do this is simply to take a deep breath and remind yourself that, while it is normal to wonder what you did "wrong," or ask yourself "What's wrong with me?", a far more constructive question to ask is, "What's wrong with the prospect?"

By focusing on the prospect, rather than reacting from your own Child Ego State, you can comment or ask questions from an Adult or Nurturing Parent position. This allows you to explore the motivation for the prospect's action. For instance:

"Bill, what is it that I've said that makes you doubt my research?"

"Mary, what is it specifically about my presentation that isn't working for you?"

Or simply: "Tom, I suspect that whatever it is I've presented thus far is not what you were hoping for." (Then stop talking.)

By making a conscious choice to leave your Child out of the discussion, you can re-engage, reassess, and reclaim momentum in the discussion. You'll identify what really triggered the negative response. You'll stand a much better chance of sustaining a positive business relationship with this person... and, eventually, closing the deal.

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