



The Success Skill No One Talks About

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Let me start by saying what it is. Your success in life, that is, in your career, your business, your relationships, your finances, your social life and even your community will depend on how well you can handle rejection. However, when I see people list their reasons for success or their success formula for their life, or the success criteria for their business, most don't mention this. Yet, thousands of studies have shown that being able to keep on in the face of rejection, after experiencing lots of "no's", is the one thing that eventually gets you to succeed.

Not everyone can deal with rejection. In fact many people cannot. Most people don't like rejection and some cannot take it at all, and so will not do anything where a rejection is a possible response. Let's look at why this is.

Biological and Social Programming

To some extent the human brain is wired to fear rejection. This comes from way back when we were in the stone age and to be alone was probably to experience an early death. Before we had a society such as we have today, if you were alone in the jungle or desert or forest, the chances were good you would not survive for long. Having people around was critical to stay alive. And so, because of this, our brains learned to fear rejection because it was a sign we may be alone. And being alone meant our survival chances were not great. At the most basic level, no matter how sophisticated we are today, our brain is still wired to keep us alive. Consequently, at a basic level, we are all wired to fear rejection to some extent.

Having been born with this natural tendency, we also tend to have it reinforced growing up. As a child you have little to no chance of staying alive if you are on your own. So, to add to your neural hardwiring, you also learn, because you are a helpless child, that you need people. And that means you need them to accept you. Rejection is terrifying to a young child. And they will do whatever they can to be accepted. The same is true when we go to school and we form friends. As teens our peers are extremely important to us and we want to fit in. We want to be accepted. We like being accepted,

and we feel good when we are accepted. With all of this biological and social programming, it is no wonder we fear rejection.

When we fear something, the fear tends to generalise unless we face the fear and master it. So, you may start out being afraid of being alone as a child or a teen, and this continues throughout adulthood when in fact being alone does not hamper your survival as much. Of course we need people around us; we work with people and we live amongst people, but as an adult we can do a lot by ourselves. However, that deep-seated, and sometimes irrational fear of rejection can be present and strong. And that fear can stop us from pursuing relationships we want. It can stop us from applying for jobs we want. It can stop us from starting a business and being our own boss. It can stop us from participating in sports we want to play. And when we experience a failure, our fear of rejection can stop us from trying again.

Every success requires hundreds of rejections. You will get many “no’s” before you get a “yes”. You don’t succeed until you have failed many times.

Changing your interpretation of rejection

The easiest way in which people learn to deal with rejection is to reframe how they understand rejection. Rejection is a concept. It is not something you can touch and hold with a shape and form. As such, different people view it in different ways. People who are in jobs where there is a lot of so-called “rejection” like sales, have to learn to see it differently or they would never be able to continue day after day dealing with people saying no to them.

One way many people reframe rejection is to think of it as a “not now”, “not at this time”, “not right now” idea. When someone says no to your offering, you think of it as something they don’t want right now, or they don’t need this now, or the time is wrong. You don’t see it as a no to you. Although it may feel like someone is saying no to you, they are not. Their rejection is most likely not about you, because the chances are they know nothing about you. It is about the proposition you are giving them. And there are lots of reasons why they may not want to “buy” it right now.

Another way in which some people reframe rejection is to consider that in order to get to success you need lots of rejections. So, with each rejection or no, you are one step closer to getting a yes. You want to celebrate a no because it moves you one step closer to success.

For many people the fear of rejection is very real and very harmful. We all do want to be accepted by, at least, some people. And the chances are that if everyone hates you maybe you need to do some work on your interpersonal skills. However, it is simply not possible to live a full life and to realise your potential unless you are prepared to accept some rejection. So, rethink how you think

about rejection. It is not personal. People don't usually say no because of who you are. It is the wrong time or the wrong product or service, or they are too busy, or a whole host of other reasons why they say no. So don't think of a no as you being rejected. And most importantly, don't let a no result in you rejecting yourself. Because that will just get you to feel depressed and scared and give up taking actions that eventually could bring you a lot of happiness and success.