

Successful Selling and the Theory of Relativity

Albert Einstein formulated the theory that says that space and time are relative concepts rather than absolute concepts. For example, consider a car speedometer reading at 65 miles per hour. How fast is the car going? This question seems like the beginning of the joke of who is buried in Grant's tomb and you are expecting a punch line. No joke here, I assure you. As a matter of fact, most would respond 65 miles per hour. This is the correct answer if and only if you are comparing the car to someone who is not moving. However, if you compare that same car to the car driving next to it that is driving 55 miles per hour, your car is only moving at 10 miles per hour. So, what does that have to do with sales? When you look at your sales performance, to what standard do you compare yourself? Is it to the others on the sales team? Is it to your quota? Is it to a sales record that has stood for 10 years in your company? Maybe you look at your performance relative to your income goals? While any of these comparative points are important, they all have one thing in common. They limit your potential. How good can you be? If you set a ceiling to that, you will never know. Yes, hitting your quota is important. Achieving your income goal is also important. But could you achieve more? Could you be better? The car moving at 65 miles per hour is moving pretty fast, but only relative to a non-moving entity. Your competitors are moving right along with you. Maybe you are in the lead, but competition does not stagnate. To them, maybe you are only moving at 10 miles per hour. Compare that same car to a jet. The speed of the car is not overly impressive. The jet can get you from New York to Florida in a couple of hours. The car needs 24 hours to reach the same destination. Competitors get smarter. Customers get smarter. And you have to get better if you are going to be successful. What worked yesterday is not going to work tomorrow. Self improvement is the only way to do it. There are no ceilings in sales unless you place them there. One of my favorite quotes is, "When someone says it can't be done, it only means that HE can't do it." Every day people accomplish the seemingly impossible. How do they do it? Simple. They don't compare themselves to any standard. They have no limitations. As I write this, I'm flying on a plane. If the Wright brothers believed in ceilings, I'd be driving. If Bill Gates believed that people would never own a personal computer, I'd be writing this on a typewriter. To further make this point, I thought I would share a personal story. When I was in the eighth grade, my family moved from New York to New Jersey. (Where to start with the jokes) At the time that we moved, I was an excellent student, A's across the board. Shortly after moving, I injured my knee playing baseball. I ended up having two knee surgeries and spent my entire freshman year of high school on crutches. Here I am living in a new state, going to a new school, knowing next to no one. I lost my focus. I became friendly with a few kids who were not very good students. They were nice kids, not troublemakers, but they did not perform well in school. During my freshman year of high school, I set my personal worst records for grades, but I was able to rationalize my performance. My grades were nothing to write home about, but I was scoring better than my friends. From that relative point of view, I was doing fine. Towards the end of my freshman year, I became friends with a different group of kids. These friends later attended Wharton, Harvard, Emory, and Bates - all prestigious schools. Relative to them, my grades were a disgrace. They never made me feel badly about it, but I felt uncomfortable. Their success drove me to rediscover myself. During the remainder of my high school and collegiate career, I elevated my game to top of the class. I credit much of that with changing my approach to relativity. Nature also uses the theory of relativity. If you put a fish in a 10 gallon tank, the fish will only grow to a certain size. The surroundings of the fish limit its size and growth. Put that same fish in a larger tank and the fish will continue to grow. Want to get better at golf? Play with better golfers. Want to run faster? Train with better runners. What limitations are you putting on your sales success? Are you failing to achieve your quota? Are your friends on the team missing their quota too? Do you accept that because you are all failing? Or do you compare yourself to a higher standard? What are you doing each and every day to improve yourself? Is your goal just to be better, or is it to be the best? You are the only obstacle to your success. Get out of your own way and enjoy the results.

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