

Sales Tough



How to bounce back from sales rejections, refusals and setbacks

By Michael Licenblat

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“Michael Licenblat's e-book 'bounce back' is just what your team needs when things don't always go to plan.

Michael's step-by-step processes are clear, easy to apply and effective in dealing with setbacks.

Much of the processes that Michael shares in his powerful e-book could be taught by the reader to other team members.

A must for every manager or team leader working with people.”

Nils Vesik
Author of Life's Little Toolbox

About the Author, Michael Licenblat

In the world of business, sales and service no matter how confident, competent or experienced you are – **pressure is a part of every process**. How well you handle those challenges, changes and problems will often determine how successful you are going to be.

Michael Licenblat is a **resilience expert** who teaches people how to **achieve more in high-pressure environments** by bouncing back from pressures, setbacks, and rejections.

Born into a family of entrepreneurial parents, Michael grew up working inside the numerous family businesses and quickly learnt that success often came to those who can ride the bumps, get up, and keep going.

Over 20 years ago, Michael became one of the pioneers in building a successful natural therapies business through overcoming market rejection, refusals, and knockbacks



Drawing on his background in Psychology, Shiatsu therapy, and over 25 years of Martial Arts experience, Michael has helped countless companies become 'pressure proof' and learn how to bounce back from the setbacks and challenges so they can out-achieve their competition.

In Michael's upbeat, interactive and hands on presentations, he takes you into the world of reading 'pressure patterns' and building personal resilience so that you walk away with practical ideas on how to 'keep your drive alive'.

Michael is the author of 'Pressure Proof – how to thrive in time of disruption, change, and pressure'. His articles are regularly published in several journals and, among his clients, he has delivered presentations to NASA, Toyota, Chemmart, Westpac, Optus, REIV, CBus Super, CPA Australia, Jims Group, Catholic Healthcare, Coles Myer Ltd., Pitcher Partners, St George, Smartline, SEEK, Hocking Stuart, Jellis Craig, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, Swinburne University, RMIT, Salesforce, and the Victorian Parliament.

Introduction

Do you become stressed or drained when you are faced with sales rejections, challenging objections or not reaching your sales targets? Do complaint calls, demanding clients or impatient customers make you feel tense and uptight?

Too many sales people under perform, avoid or miss sales targets simply because they are unable to bounce back from rejections, objections or setbacks. This ends up costing companies in lost sales, increased non-dollar productive time, and reduced conversation rates.

The reality is that hearing 'NO' is part of sales. No matter how good your technique, rapport or sales process is, you will be faced with rejection, failure or cold feet from clients who say 'NO'.

**Your success doesn't come from not receiving a 'NO',
but rather, what you *do* with that 'NO'.**

The very reason why rejection and complaints damages egos, drains energy, and demotivates personal drive is determined by how resilient you are to pressure.

Resilience is characterized as being able to adapt to, and bounce back from, tough situations and setbacks - without compromising your objective. Being able to bounce back quickly from a demanding client, sales rejection, complaint call or setback, instead of dwelling in self-pity, allows you to get on with your work and keep working towards your sales target.

So, how do you bounce back quickly from the emotional stress of rejections and complaints?

In nature, the willow is a strong, resilient tree that can tolerate strong weather conditions because it bends easily in the wind without breaking. It adapts to its environment in order to not only survive, but to thrive.

When you cut yourself, your body instantly works to clot the blood, seals the wound and fights any infection. If you break a bone, your body immediately goes to work on protecting the area with inflammation, healing the bone tissue, and restoring circulation. Your body is designed, by nature, to be resilient and *bounce back* from setbacks because it adapts itself to restore balance and health.

You don't have to think about how to become resilient – you are *innately* resilient. It is in your genetics – it is part of your survival as a species to be able to get back on your feet and keep on pushing forward. The reason why you, sometimes, don't bounce back is that **you** get in the way.

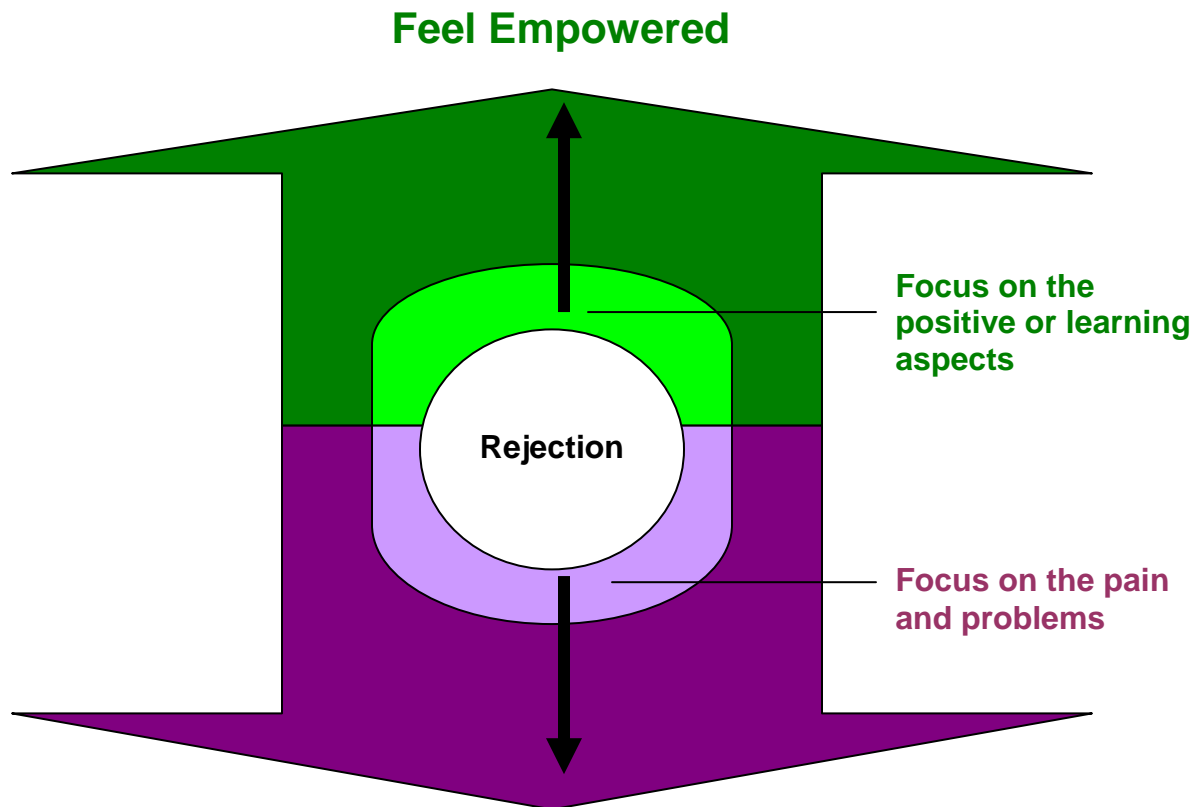
Principle #1: Become Mentally Tough

Why do rejections and complaints hurt so much? Is it because it makes you feel like a failure? Is it because you feel as if you are *not* good enough, and that no matter what you try you aren't going to appease the customer?

No. Rejections and complaints hurt because you focus your mind on the pain. Have you noticed how well people can cope with pain or injury until they see blood?

In one study, three groups of participants were asked to soak their arm in a bucket of freezing cold iced water for as long as they could stand it. During the submersion, the first group watched funny movies and told jokes to each other, the second group practised a relaxation technique, and the third group just sat there in silence. Groups A & B were able to increase their pain threshold by 50%, whereas, there was no change to the pain threshold of group C.

By refocusing your mind away from the painful and negative aspects of the sales rejection or complaint, you will bounce back faster.



Focus on the positive, not the pain

Dr Rich Allen (Ph.D. in educational psychology) has studied how the brain receives, processes, stores and recalls information. In a leadership program of 80 participants, a 60-second movie clip was shown of a car traveling down a dirt road and then colliding with a barn. Immediately after the clip the group was given a list of questions about what they had just seen. Two different questionnaires were then distributed. Half the participants were asked ‘How fast was the car moving when the car *bumped* into the barn?’ The other half were asked ‘How fast was the car moving when the car *smashed* into the barn?’

The group which was asked to describe the collision as ‘bumped’ reported an average speed of 42km/hr. The group that was asked to describe the collision as ‘smashed’ reported an average speed of 67km/hr. The alteration of a single word produced a significant change in the participants’ perception of the film clip.

In the same sense, if you describe a rejection or complaint as a personal reflection of your self worth, then you will probably feel like a failure and give up. For example, rejections feel painful and you will feel worthless if you describe it in terms of ‘you’. Comments like ‘It’s all my fault’, ‘Why can’t I make these sales?’, ‘What’s wrong with me?’ is an invitation for self-pity and misery. Even the word ‘reject’, which is defined as ‘to refuse to accept or use; to throw away; to discard’ conjures up images of worthless garbage tossed away into the bin. What a ridiculous way to describe a human being!

Putting yourself down reduces the effort you put into your next client or customer. Research has found that people with lower self-esteem set lower expectations for their performanceⁱ, underestimate their capabilities and set less challenging or mediocre goalsⁱⁱ which leads to putting in less effort than those with high self esteemⁱⁱⁱ. In short, taking rejection personally can lead to not trying as hard at the next sale.

Instead, be kind to yourself. Acknowledge how you feel, but don’t dwell on the rejection or complaint. Pay attention to the aspects of the sales/customer service process that you felt *good* about. Focus on the aspects that *did* go well. Did you present yourself well? If so, then be pleased that you did! Were you proactive in the sale/call? Well, that takes courage, so if you did that then be proud of yourself. Did you give your best effort in the sales/service process? Then, that’s all you can ask of yourself, so acknowledge yourself for having the confidence to be your best. **Focus on the positive aspects – not the painful ones** and you will bounce back faster from any rejection, objection or complaint.

Principle #2: Fail Fast and Learn

Dr. Maxwell Maltz, a renowned plastic surgeon, began research into the human mind. He noticed that with some people, once the bandages were removed after receiving cosmetic plastic surgery, if their *internal* self-esteem had not changed, then no matter how perfect a job he did, they still felt ugly. What they focused on, regardless of the reality, is what they experienced as true.

Describing the event in terms of the ‘learning’ you gained from it, allows you to feel empowered that this situation will make you either smarter, stronger, and one step closer to a ‘Yes’. For example, look at rejection as a stepping-stone that points out the path to where you want to go. In that sense, rejection is actually a helping hand that shows you what *didn’t* work, so that you can find what *will* work. Without knowing what doesn’t work, how can you expect to grow and improve?

As a child, you would have fallen over many times before finally taking your first steps. As I watch my own children learn how to walk, I notice how each failed attempt teaches them how to improve, adapt and overcome. Each false step is actually a step closer to the right step. Rejection and complaints are arenas to learn how to improve, optimize and strengthen so that you can be come better at what you do.

Tip: Describe your rejection or complaint experience in empowering terms instead of ‘put-down’ language. Instead of wallowing in self-pity, look at how it is showing you the way to getting the next sale. Ask yourself:

‘What can I learn from this?’

‘How can this situation make me stronger, smarter or happier in my life?’

‘What do I know now, that I didn’t know before?’

‘How will this outcome help me improve in the sales/service process?’

Is that being a Pollyanna, pie-in-the-sky optimist who is less in touch with reality? To a certain degree, yes! Will being positive and optimistic help you bounce back from rejection and complaints faster, keep your self-esteem intact and your motivation strong?

Absolutely!

The biggest threat you will ever face is your fear of being rejected and feel ‘not being good enough’. In that state of mind you are less likely to try as hard next time and risk failure again. You must build your confidence to get past your fear of failure so that it doesn’t paralyze you from action.

The degree to which you are prepared to adapt yourself to rise above rejection/complaint instead of getting sucked into self-pity, will determine how quickly you bounce back and get on with your day.

Principle #3: Use Powerful Postures

If you spend a lot of time on a conventional telephone, you are likely to have experienced ‘telephone-neck strain’ syndrome before. This is where the muscles between the neck and shoulder contract and become either sore or strained due to holding the telephone between your ear and shoulder as you work, walk or type.

There are a series of muscles that are involved in this strain between your neck, shoulder blades and upper back. If they are consistently tense, those muscles can fatigue causing problems like headaches, anxiety, eyestrain, tiredness, irritability, neck pain and can even restrict your breathing. Not only do these symptoms feel uncomfortable but they also reduce your working stamina, mental focus and ability to quickly bounce back - making you more prone to feeling ‘stressed’ and at your ‘wit’s end’.

Incorrect posture and body use will **create tension** in your body - making you feel drained and unenthusiastic. When combined with the disappointment of a sales rejection or complaint call, **the way in which you hold your body during the day can determine whether you bounce back quickly or feel tired and unmotivated.** Quite often, your unconscious habits determine whether you bounce back or burn out after a sales rejection.

When you meet/speak with clients or customers, notice *how* you stand. Standing more on one leg, leaning to one side, wearing high heels or even working over a bench or counter, may be creating muscle tension that is **draining your body** and making you more vulnerable to feeling strained and fatigued.

Many people have sections along one side of their body that have become tighter than along the other side, such as a calf muscle, leg, hip, or part of their back. Many people, for example, have one leg slightly shorter than the other. It may be less than a quarter inch up to about 2 inches (my right leg is about 1 cm shorter than my left).

So that you are able to stand up straight and walk without restriction, your body will compensate for those shorter or tightened areas. It contracts another part of your body, often on the opposite side of your body, so that your eyes are able to see the world straight and not on an angle.

Quite often, a dull lower-back ache comes from tension in the muscles on the front of your body, particularly along the front and sides of your legs.

Also, after some time, you may find your posture stooping forward and creating soreness in your upper back. Again, one of the core sources of upper back tension comes from tightness in the front of your body, often stemming from poor posture. Tension in your chest and shoulders will pull your body forward and create upper-back tension.

Since the front of your head weighs more than the back of your head, your forehead is slightly forward when your head sits straight on your neck. The problem occurs when you stick out your chin (like you do when you are thinking about something or staring at the computer screen) – it unbalances your head and neck that creates tension in the back of your neck.

Principle #4: Build Your Mental Reserve Tank

“What will you do when you have nothing left?” This is the question my son’s martial arts teacher asked the class this morning. When you are in competition, and you are physically exhausted, you will be confronted with the reality that martial arts is a mind game. It will be at this point when you will know if you are mentally prepared to handle pressure and be able to calmly and effectively apply your techniques when you are exhausted, overwhelmed, or even mentally defeated.

They were strong words to a room of kids who were ranging in age from 10 - 16, but he was teaching them a skill that they would not only use in martial arts, but would serve them for the rest of their lives. Adapting to, and pushing through, the tough spots in life.

There is an increasing trend for people to pursue the path of least resistance. Finding the easiest, most efficient way, to achieve a task makes sense (why would you want to endure unnecessary strain and stress in life?). Sometimes, however, there is no easy solution, and you will need to do the hard work, have the tough conversations, and deal with uncertainty, self doubt or panic. It is in these moments that leaders and their teams need to draw on their resilience to be adaptable, resourceful and solution focused to rise above the challenge and be successful.

Todd Sampson, co-host on the marketing discussion program Gruen Transfer, recently wrote, produced and hosted the show ‘Body Hack’ which uncovers how people survive in extremes by “walking a mile in their shoes”. In one episode, Todd spent 10 days training with the French Foreign Legion in the Amazon, exploring what builds resilience.

Todd explains it was one of the toughest things he has even done, he got injured on the first day and then spent the next 9 days pushing his body through exhaustion, breakdown, total fatigue, and hypothermia and spent most of his time fighting a strong desire to quit.

“I learned a lot about pain and mental toughness in the jungle. The soldiers know that pain is a really important signaling system, and without it they would be injured all time, but they don’t let it control them or dominate their mind.” [4]

Being resourceful is a core resilience quality required to thrive in high pressure work environments. Resourcefulness is about making the best of a tough situation by creatively and persistently using the tools you have available to solve a problem, achieve an outcome, or reduce the fallout. Think MacGyver, The A-Team, or Inspector Gadget. Learn to use what you have to adapt and resolve your situation.

Military strategist and United States Air Force Colonel John Boyd developed the ‘OODA loop’ phrase which refers to the decision cycle of observe, orient, decide, and act. Boyd applied the concept to the combat operations process, often at the strategic level in military operations. It is now also often applied to understand commercial operations and learning processes. The approach encourages people to be agile and adaptable when dealing with any challenge - be it change, pressure or adversarial. [5]

Adaptability requires three things:

a. Willingness

When your back is against the wall, when nothing is working, and when your mind is telling you ‘it’s too hard’ you will need to have the willingness to push on and solve this problem instead of give up. This requires you to choose between being a ‘problem solver’ and a ‘problem describer’.

b. Stickability

To find answers you sometimes need to sit outside your comfort zone and stick at a problem for a period of time. Having the courage to sit in a space of uncertainty, without giving up or becoming exacerbated, gives you a greater possibility of finding a solution.

c. Creativity

The wisdom of Albert Einstein tells us that ‘*We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.*’ Similarly, you may need to use different thinking, or change your approach, to resolve your challenge. Changing the questions you ask yourself can open up new perspectives. For example, rather than thinking ‘I don’t know how to fix this’ (not useful thinking), you may choose to think ‘if this was possible to resolve, what would I need to do?’.

Jim Rohn has been a career coach to some of the world’s most successful motivational speakers such as Tony Robbins, Mark Victor Hansen, Jack Canfield, Brian Tracy, and many others. It is perhaps this piece of advice that best summarizes adaptability - “*Never wish life were easier, wish that you were better.*”

Principle #5: Develop Tenacious Drive

As Muhammad Ali said *"There may have been others who held the title for longer but I get the credit for being the only four-time champ. What people forget is that to win it four times you have to lose it four times. I was the world champion of getting up."*

In going a little further, Ali would quote his favourite poem (he studied poetry as a means to combat his dyslexia) ... *"Every great work, every great accomplishment, has been brought into manifestation through holding to the vision, and often just before the big achievement, comes apparent failure and discouragement. For the greatest accomplishment in life is not in never failing, but in rising again when you fall."* **Florence Scovel Shinn**

One of the core qualities of resilience is tenacity. Tenacity is the unwavering drive to get back up, push forward, and keep going regardless of what is thrown your way, or how desperately your mind and body want to stop.

Tenacity is not taught - it is unleashed. It is discovered via personal desire, situations of injustice, through oppression, and from ego (not wanting to be told you can't do it).

Tenacity can be seen in many forms in the professional world. Projects that are drawn out and require sustained focus and meticulous attention to detail require tenacity to produce high quality results. Litigation cases that drag out for years, arguing over every step require tenacity to get a successful outcome for their client. Traders who lose successive trades and need to not lose their nerve and self confidence need tenacity to stick to their trading plan. Students that have to do homework that they don't like or understand need tenacity to achieve high grades. Business owners who face unexpected financial costs need tenacity to stay motivated.

If you break it down, tenacity has 4 key attributes:

- a. Aspiration: a clear destination of where you want to get to and what you want to achieve.
- b. Specification: an unambiguous process of exactly what needs to be done in order to achieve the outcome
- c. Distraction: Identifying the tasks, people, situations, or personal habits that will get in the way of carrying out your action
- d. Motivation: Establishing a strong emotional drive attached to achieving the outcome(s).

I have yet to hear of a motivational seminar designed to inspire confidence in toddlers so that they feel they have the ability to walk. They just do it because they want it and work at it long enough. Make sure that you are not getting in the way of your tenacity.

Principle #6: It's Not About You

In business you need to be prepared to try different ideas to generate sales. Some will work, and some won't. It has been said that half of your marketing won't work...the only problem is that you don't know which half that is.

One of my business mentors, [Pete Cook](#), says to "*expect to fail at 50% of your projects*". This advice isn't being pessimistic, rather, **it puts your expectations in reality and helps you understand that failure is an inevitable part of business, and that you may need to fail before you find success.**

When you personalise the failure of a marketing idea or a lost sale, you are doing an injustice to yourself and to your business. Your self-esteem and self-confidence are often what drives your motivation and competence to make contact with new prospects. **Your energy drives your sales activity.**

If you allow yourself to stew over a rejection, feel bad over a failed marketing campaign, or beat yourself up because of a sales pitch that missed the mark, then you shouldn't be in business.

Jenny Hamby is the president of [SeminarMarketingPro.com](#). Jenny wrote about an article that received negative feedback from one of her readers. At first, Jenny felt hurt. She then began to doubt herself and even question her abilities.

Keep in mind that Jenny is an expert in her industry and has been operating a successful business for many years - however she was still vulnerable to the impact that rejection and negative feedback can have on her self-esteem.

After some reflection, Jenny recognised that not every marketing effort will resonate with all her readers, and felt a lot better within herself knowing that every marketing effort won't always hit the mark. She writes "*There will always people who are unhappy with what you do or say. Don't contort yourself or stifle your message out of fear for how they'll react. Instead, stand firmly in your power, speak your truth and BE yourself 100%. The people you are meant to serve and teach will recognise you and respond*" [6]

You are going to try things that won't work, you are going to say things that will sound stupid, and you are going to pitch for work that you won't get. That's just how business work. Expect it, don't over dramatise it, and keep moving on.

Your role and responsibility in sales is to survive the rejections and keep going. This is a core reason why many businesses fail - not due to bad planning, but because people are blindly optimistic about their success rate and then reality crushes their self-esteem.

Final Thoughts

Bouncing back from difficult people, rejections and complaint calls all comes down to how well you manage yourself.

I hope you got three key messages from this e-book:

1. There are many simple, easy-to-do strategies you can use to bounce back from sales rejections or complaint calls.
2. Many sales people unwittingly *stop themselves* from bouncing back because they do not know how to self-manage to become resilient to pressure. Sales teams receive sales skills training **but all the knowledge in the world won't help them unless they can pick themselves up after a setback and continue the sales process.**
3. You have the ability to control how you feel, manage your energy output, and decide your recovery speed. You are not a victim. You are in control of how you handle setbacks. You have always been in control, but perhaps just not been aware of it.

If you are in sales or customer service, then take the tools in this e-book and start applying them today. Pick one idea each week and put it into action.

If you are a manager, leader or coach of a sales or customer service team, you need to educate your team on how to bounce back from rejections, objections and setbacks. Don't assume that they know how to do it. The old saying '*what you don't know won't hurt you*' is **wrong!** The truth is '*what you don't know, **can** and **will** hurt you – and will continue to hurt you until you change it*'.

I suggest that you give each person in your team this e-book to read as a starting point. The next step is to educate yourself and your team on how to bounce back fast from rejections, objections and setbacks.

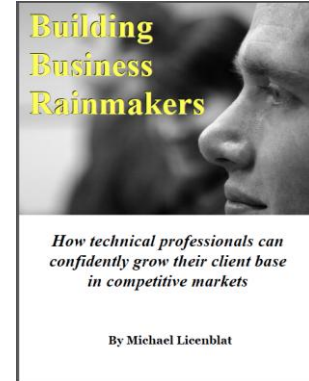
Your Next Steps...

STEP 1: Get the White Paper

Download the white paper ‘Building Business Rainmakers – how to grow your client base, and increase your sales, in tough and competitive markets’.

Download from

<http://www.bouncebackfast.com>



STEP 2: Let's have a conversation

If the principles in this white paper resonate with where your business is, and you would like your team to start building their client base and increasing their revenue targets, then let's have a chat to see how we can help you.

Simply send me an email from

<http://www.bouncebackfast.com>



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