

Not everyone wants to be well. Do you?

by Steve Rankel

Have you ever wondered why some of the most promising prospects resist your efforts to help them?

Maybe this story will strike a familiar chord:

You meet the CEO of a prospective client and see incredible opportunities to help them; at the same time, you're confident your firm can offer something no one else can.

So, you spend hours working with them to learn their business. Because you are particularly gifted at what you do, you are able to understand their very complex business problems (in itself an enormously valuable service), diagnose the root causes, and offer a solution.

You spend lots of time putting together a sophisticated proposal, filling it with valuable answers that are worth thousands of dollars.

Beaming with pride and feeling very accomplished you present the proposal to the prospect, fully expecting an appreciative reception and a smooth sales conversation.

But, you find that the prospect begins picking your proposal apart saying things like:

'Nah, we don't need that, we only need this piece.'

'Do we really need to do that?'

OR,

'We already have most of this. Let's just do this one piece here.'

And you know darn well that they have no idea how far outside reality they are living!

Frustrating, isn't it?

Diagnosis:

Not everyone wants to be well.

ENTER THE NATURAL LEARNER.

Psychologists have studied the population and determined that only 10% are natural learners.

What's a natural learner?

A natural learner is someone who is constantly looking for a better way to do things, always interested in growing, and ready to consider change.

How do you know when you have a natural learner on your hands?

Here are some telltale signs:

1. They have 5, 10 or maybe 20 books on their bedstand.
2. They think sitting around doing nothing is a waste of time. They'd rather read or have their mind engaged.
3. They ask for advice.
4. They subscribe to newsletters and magazines and devour new ideas.
5. They spend money on new tools, systems and approaches because they want to do everything better.
6. Even though they prefer to be right, they are humble enough to be persuaded when they are not.

Are you a natural learner?

Now, let's look at the rest of the population.

Based on my own studies of social trends, combined with personal observations gleaned from 20 years spent working, selling and teaching around the world, I have observed that you can generally divide prospects into 3 categories:

1. 10% Natural Learners – Folks who eagerly seek the truth and spend money to find it; who are not satisfied with the status quo; and even though change is as difficult for them as for anyone else, they find it energizing and believe it's the right thing. They care about doing what's right, and doing what's better.

Do you know any Natural Learners? Do you have any as clients?

2. 30% Relenters – People who will relent and change only when the pain of staying the same becomes SO great that they must do SOMETHING. But they wouldn't do it on their own.

Do you know any Relenters? Do you have any as clients?

3. 60% Resenters – Those who will NOT CHANGE EVER, even though they are living in pain and frustration, can't see a way out, and complain about it all the time. These folks wouldn't change even if you held a gun to their head. They think that the problem is everyone else's fault.

Do you know any Resenters? Do you have any as clients?

WHAT'S THIS ALL MEAN?

Natural learners, they're a blast to do work with. They respect you. They treat you well. They understand when things don't work out perfectly. They extend grace.

I have one client who has said to me several times, 'I don't think you're charging us enough; I know it took you longer to do that work than you're charging me.'

Now that's a client you want for life.

Relenters can be convinced, sometimes, if the time is right. But you have to catch them at the right time, or spend time persuading them. That could take a while.

Resenters can never be convinced. You need to learn to spot these folks early and then move on. They'll vacuum your time, energy and spirit. Then they'll say it's your fault.

What about your clients? Which category best describes them?

So... How do you KNOW if someone wants to be well?

It looks like this:

1. You're fed up with where you're at.
2. You don't have an answer but know you need one.
3. You are willing to do whatever it takes to get the answer.
4. If it means changing, you are willing to change.
5. If it means spending more money than you expected, you'll figure out a way to do it.
6. If it involves personal growth, you'll grow.
7. If it's different than you expected, you'll accept it as long as there's a reasonable, sensible explanation.

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Do you?