



PRACTICE PEARLS

## Business Lesson #1 ,Ä From a Child

Steven Visentin

Are you *ever* afraid to ask patients to pay or to tell them how long it will take to fully correct their spines? Then this story's for you. Here's a valuable business and life lesson on why we sometimes hesitate and the secret to living a fearless, abundant life.

While visiting the Middle East on vacation, I saw fantastic sites, but I also learned a valuable business and life lesson from someone I met in Jordan who had no sales training or anything of real value to sell, but was running a very profitable business in the middle of nowhere!

When I stepped off the tour bus and started across the stark desert landscape, I noticed a skinny Bedouin boy greeting tourists ahead of me. He was wearing gray clothes that hung off him like rags on a hanger. He looked to be 10 or 11 years old, with sunbaked, dark-brown skin, black hair and dark eyes.

With each cluster of tourists that passed, he shouted a greeting in their language. When a Japanese group passed by, he bowed deeply and shouted something in Japanese that made them smile and wave. As a group of Italians walked past, he shouted "Ciao, Italiani." They laughed and waved at him, too.

Finally, I approached and he said to me, "Good morning, where are you from?" in perfect English.



I asked, "How many languages do you speak?" He said, "Seven." I replied, "That's remarkable."

"By the way," he asked, "would you like to buy some caramels?" He held up a clear plastic bag of gold-colored candies.

I said, "No thanks." He looked up at me mildly disappointed, but immediately delivered a very clever fall-back position: "If you do decide to buy something today, would you ask me first?"

I said, "Sure." Then he said, "Would you give me your word on that?" I answered, "Of course."

I proceeded to the site. The day wore on and the desert grew hot. It was time to return to the bus. In each hand, I had a large, white plastic bag full of trinkets I'd bought for friends.

As I returned, I saw the boy again. He positioned himself between me and the bus. As I walked to the right, he shifted to face me. When I went to the left, he moved in front of me again. I had to get on the bus in time. As I approached him with the two bags, he looked at me as if I was the biggest turd he had ever seen. He looked at the souvenirs I had bought and exclaimed, "But you promised!"

Every child has used this on an adult: "Mommy, you promised" or "Daddy, you promised." I remembered; I had given him my word and now felt as if he had a gun to my head. He was that persuasive. Needless to say, I bought every caramel he had left. I wasn't interested in the candy, but I wanted to buy back my self-respect.

I was a few minutes late getting on the bus. As I climbed aboard, everyone was staring at me. I quickly remembered the candy and asked, "Would anyone like a caramel?" They all started to laugh. When I asked, "What's so funny?" they held up *their* bags of caramels. He had sold nearly every person on that bus!

Why You Hesitate

As a child, you too were nearly irresistible. Then you heard the word "No," not just one time, but thousands and thousands of times. You started to hold back. You thought, *What will they think of me if I ask for what I want? Maybe they'll hate me for asking*"; or worse yet, *Maybe I'll hate myself*" That's dangerous thinking, but I'll give you the antidote. If I don't, someone reading this article may be too shy to ask their patients for a reasonable fee or follow through with necessary care.

### It Doesn't Matter What Your Patients Think of You

When you present a care plan, confront the situation fearlessly. This is exactly what that Bedouin boy did. He stood between me and the bus, and reminded me of my promise. During the report of findings, you're offering something more valuable than cheap candy. Your recommendations are a path to correcting your patient's spine and improving their health.

With this in mind, put aside your need to be liked. Without holding back, tell them the truth. Then, let them decide how they want to proceed. Anything less is terribly wrong.

### Ask for What You Want

Holding back is a habit that ruins everything. As a child, you had no such inhibitions. You entered into relationships easily, poured limitless energy into them and asked for what you wanted audaciously.

It's time to reclaim your authentic, courageous self. Before your next report to a new patient, tell yourself, *I'm going to offer the best options and whatever they choose, I'll do my utmost to lead them on a path toward better health*. With great skill, hard work and the patience of a saint, everyone can win. They'll regain their health and your clinic will prosper.

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