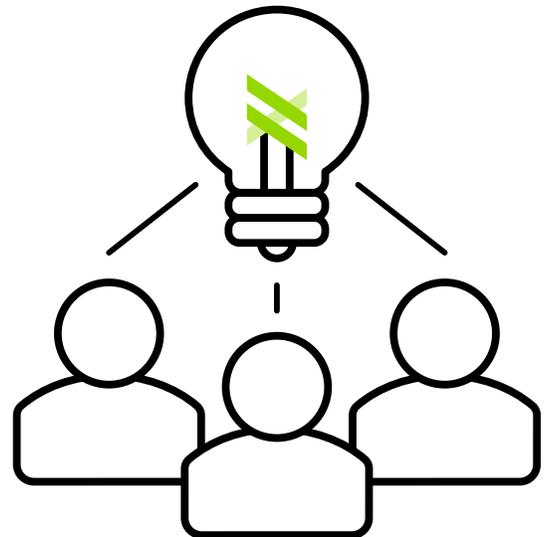


ACCOUNTABILITY & PROBLEM SOLVING



TOP PRODUCER'S EDGE
A Southwestern Coaching TPE Module

THE PROBLEM-SOLVING FORMULA

All of us are faced with problems daily. In sales, you run into problems all the time. You might run into traffic or forget your presentation materials. You might say the wrong thing or not be talking to the right decision-maker. As a sales professional, you need to be able to think on your feet.

It's important to be your own problem solver. In fact, that is one of the reasons why salespeople are some of the highest-paid professionals in the world—because the world will pay almost anything for a problem solver. Below is a system that will help you solve nearly any problem.

PROBLEM-SOLVING STEPS

- 1. Identify the problem.**
- 2. Identify the options.**
- 3. Determine which option is best.**
- 4. Always focus on the solution.**
(e.g., Be solution oriented.)
- 5. Be your own best problem solver.**
Don't always rely on others to help you. The best thing you can do is to learn to think for yourself, solve your own problems, and teach others to do the same.

Whenever we're faced with a problem, the first thing we need to do is identify the problem and then change our perspective. Identify all possible options, pick the best one, and then go do it. Go be problem solvers.

“Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

CHINESE PROVERB

THE TRUE-YOU INTERVIEW

Accountability is making the commitment to improve. This means being open-minded to feedback, especially in areas where you have weaknesses. However, when it comes to ourselves, we have blind spots because we can't see ourselves the way the people closest to us do. You can hold yourself accountable to improving by asking others what they see in you.

The True-You Interview is a system for getting honest feedback. Through asking a series of seven questions to the people who know you best, you can learn about areas in which you might be excelling and other areas where there might be room for improvement.

Pick three to five people in your life that you're fairly close with who would be extremely honest about your strengths and your weaknesses. It could be a significant other, a parent, a best friend, or a coworker. The key is to interview people who will be extremely honest and forthright. You can help by creating a safe environment for them. Tell them that even if it's good or bad, you want to hear it because you're focused on growth and accountability.

THE TRUE-YOU INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

1. What are my strengths?
2. What do you see as my strengths in my everyday life and business?
3. What are my weaknesses?
4. What doesn't work about the person I am?
5. What do other people count on me for?
6. What do other people know I can't be counted on for?
7. Is there anybody that I should apologize to for wrongdoing?

Being truly accountable means that you have to be vulnerable and totally open to feedback, both positive and negative.

In the space below, list three to five people who are close to you and would give you open and honest feedback to the questions above.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

CLEANING UP ROCKY RELATIONSHIPS

Another way to hold yourself accountable is to make sure that you don't have any baggage hanging on from your past. The seventh question of the True-You Interview may bring up some of these relationship conflicts that need to be resolved. The steps below will help you with this process.

1. Forgive them.

You need to be able to move past whatever wrong this person has done to you. Think, "You know what? They were doing the best they could do, and I can forgive them."

2. Have a conversation.

Have a conversation with that person and ask for your own forgiveness. You may not even know why there is tension in the relationship, but apologizing for whatever you may have contributed to that tension can go a long way.

3. Let them know.

Let them know you're working to better yourself and that you want to build the relationship back to the way it used to be.

4. Start rebuilding immediately. Don't wait.

There's nothing more powerful than looking someone in the eye and honestly saying, "I'm sorry." Even if they do not forgive you, forgiving them will allow you to move on and leave the baggage of that conflict behind.

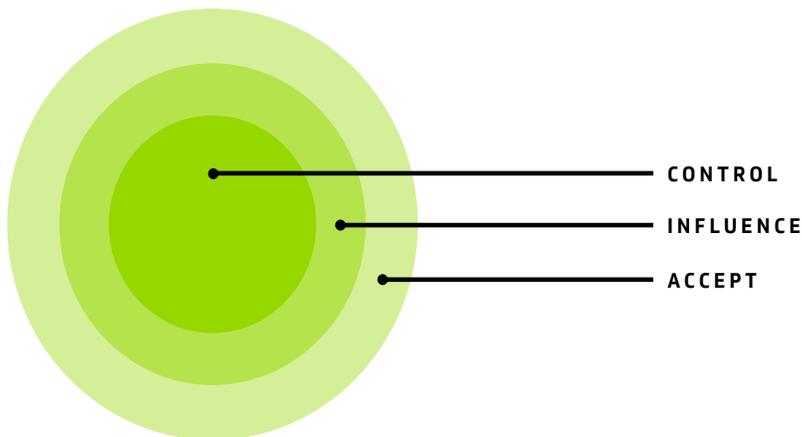
THE R.A.F.T. TECHNIQUE

There are certain things in life we can't control such as death, natural disasters, or even who buys from us. Top producers focus on controlling the controllable factors. Those include the number of hours we work, the number of calls we do in a day, and our attitude.

One of the challenges of life is that sometimes external, uncontrollable circumstances, known as "problems," interrupt our day. At Southwestern Consulting, we refer to problems as events because the word "problem" has a negative connotation and truly every "problem" is an opportunity for growth.

In the river of life, there are fighters, floaters, and navigators. Typically, the ones who are happiest and most productive are navigators who learn to control their raft and adapt to changing conditions.

- R** – Realize an event is occurring.
- A** – Accept the situation.
- F** – Focus on the controllables (hours, calls, and attitude).
- T** – Transform the negative emotion into positive momentum.



YOU CAN CONTROL:

Attitude, self-talk, schedule, and work stats

YOU CAN INFLUENCE:

People, interruptions, and customer investment

YOU MUST ACCEPT:

External circumstances, rules, regulations, and preconceived notions

CHECK YOURSELF

One of the ways to create discipline in your life is to have a partner or someone who helps you stay accountable. It's in essence "checking yourself." Oftentimes, you need someone to help you do that. Not everybody has that discipline and ability to make sure they're going through life doing all the things they know they need to do.

If you knew one thing that you could and should do in order to be more successful and reach your goals, and you aren't doing it, you've got to ask yourself, "Why not?" Accountability is the key. And if you have somebody—whether that person is a paid coach or a friend—who also wants to have accountability, then you are more likely to accomplish your goals by involving that other person.

For example, you could have someone to text (like your coach) every morning before you make your first dial so that someone is holding you accountable to getting started at the same time every day.

List some of the goals you are having trouble consistently achieving below. Next to each goal, list one or two people who could potentially help keep you accountable.

GOAL	POTENTIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER(S)
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Put your plan into action. Contact your potential accountability partners and ask them to join you in achieving your goals. Come up with a plan and start now.

"Discipline yourself to do the things you need to do when you need to them, and the day will come when you will be able to do the things you want to when you want do them!"

ZIG ZIGLAR

UPPING THE ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability helps us grow. Getting out of your comfort zone and stretching yourself will create growth.

How can you up the accountability around your goals and what you want to achieve? If it's going to hurt a little bit, cost you money, or embarrass you in some way, find a way to play the accountability game and up the accountability.

Examples of upping the accountability:

1. Every time you don't ask for referrals, you have to pay your coworker \$20.
2. Any day that you have less than six appointments, you have to send your boss a \$50 bottle of wine.
3. Any day you don't finish ten dials, you have to do ten burpees the second you get home.
4. If you don't talk to ten decision-makers in a day, you have to spend \$100 on team gear for a friend who roots for your own team's rival.
5. For every curse word that you say, you have to put a dollar in a jar, and at the end of 30 days, you have to give that money away.
6. Pay your assistant \$5 for every call you miss.
7. If you forget to close and ask for the business, you have to send \$100 to your alma mater's archrival.

Who do you know that will help hold you accountable?

What do you need to be held accountable for doing?

Think of a game based on having to pay someone for something that you don't want to. Get with that person and up the accountability today.

ACCOUNTABILITY CONTRACT

I, _____, agree to accomplish the following goal(s) before _____. I also hereby do formally commit myself to these activities.

This goal is challenging, but reachable, and I willingly accept the challenge.

MY GOAL:

In support of this goal, I will undertake the following activities:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Signature _____

Accountability Partner _____ Date _____

Rewards for achieving goal:

Consequences for not achieving goal:

ACTION ITEMS



PROBLEMS AND PAIN

“Life is difficult.

This is a great truth—one of the greatest truths. It is a great truth because once we truly see this truth, we transcend it. Once we truly understand and accept that life is difficult, life is no longer difficult. Because once it is accepted, the fact that life is difficult no longer matters...

Discipline is the basic set of tools we require to solve life’s problems. Without discipline, we can solve nothing. With only some discipline, we can solve only some problems. With total discipline, we can solve all problems.

What makes life difficult is that the process of confronting and solving problems is a painful one. Problems, depending upon their nature, evoke in us feelings of frustration, grief, sadness, loneliness, guilt, frustration, regret, anger, fear, anxiety, or anguish or despair. These are uncomfortable feelings, often very uncomfortable, often as painful as any kind of physical pain, sometimes equaling the very worst kind of physical pain. Indeed, it is because of the pain that events or conflicts engender in us that we call them problems. And since life poses an endless series of problems, life is always difficult and is full of pain as well as joy.

Yet it is in this whole process of meeting and solving problems that life has its meaning. Problems are the cutting edge that distinguishes between success and failure. Problems call forth our courage and our wisdom; indeed, they create our courage and our wisdom.

It is only because of problems that we grow mentally and spiritually. When we desire to encourage the growth of the human spirit, we challenge and encourage the human capacity to solve problems. Just as in school, we deliberately set problems for our children to solve. It is through the pain of confronting and resolving problems that we learn. As Benjamin Franklin said, ‘Those things that hurt, instruct.’ It is for this reason that wise people learn not to dread but actually to welcome problems and actually to welcome the pain of problems.”

M. SCOTT PECK, EXCERPT FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF *THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED*

ARE YOU AVERAGE?

“Average” is what the failures claim to be when their family and friends ask them why they are not more successful.

“Average” is the top of the bottom, the best of the worst; the bottom of the top, the worst of the best.

Which of these are you?

“Average” means being run-of-the-mill, mediocre, insignificant, a nonentity.

Being “average” is the lazy person’s cop-out; it’s lacking the guts to take a stand in life; it’s living by default.

Being “average” is to take up space for no purpose; to take the trip through life but never to pay the fare; to return no interest for God’s investment to you.

Being “average” is to pass one’s life away with time, rather than to pass one’s time away with life. It’s to kill time rather than to work it to death.

To be “average” is to be forgotten once you pass from this life. The successful are remembered for their contributions, the failures are remembered because they tried, but the “average,” the silent majority, is just forgotten.

To be “average” is to commit the greatest crime one can against one’s self, humanity, and one’s god. The saddest epitaph is this: “Here lies Mr. or Ms. Average—here lies the remains of what might have been except for their belief that they were only ‘average.’”

EDMUND GAUDET