

Flinchlessness

By Vince Poscente



You flinch . . . you lose.

Imagine skiing at over 130 mph on skis and you catch an edge. One instinctive flinch to catch your balance and you lose any chance at winning the race. The challenge is overcoming the protective instinct to throw your hands out for balance while maintaining stability and maintaining your line.

In a sale, negotiation or even a debate, flinch and you lose ground. In a world of incredible speed the lost ground might be too much to recover from.

Imagine you are a sales person selling a high-ticket product and the prospect questions your intentions. Picture negotiating a deal where the other side gets the notion you might settle for less. Suppose you are debating a point and you pause with a wide-eyed blink at a critical point. In any of these three situations a shrewd challenger will likely counter punch with his agenda.

How then do you overcome instinct and not flinch?

Think of something in your job or life where you would benefit from not flinching. There are three approaches that can assist in your quest for flinchlessness:

1. Expand your risk tolerance -- When speed skiing it was clear that being mentally tough would translate into better results. Overcoming the instinct to flinch on the racecourse could be prepared for in unconventional ways.

On my non-speed skiing days I would take to the slopes on short, flexible slalom skis at high speed. Skis made for slower finesse turns would become chaotic boards akin to squirrels on crack. I would train my body to relax while the skis drastically shot every which way.

In the summer I would rocket down rocky slopes on my mountain bike. Instead of putting a death grip on my handlebars I would teach my nervous system to relax and let the bike bounce and shimmy underneath me.

Expand your risk tolerance by putting yourself in higher risk situations.

In sales, expand your risk tolerance in a variety of ways. If a prospect says something that is incorrect, don't smile and nod. Beg to disagree. Appreciate their point of view and then show value in looking at it in a different way. People love to be right but love it more when someone proves that they are cared for.

Try prospecting in a new way. Back when I was selling real estate I was comfortable doing cold calls on the phone. Then I learned a technique by the amazing Bill Nasby. Here is the script that he teaches.

Sales Guy: "Hi, I'm with ABC Real Estate. When are you folks planning on moving?" Followed by a big toothy smile and a flinchless gaze.

Prospect: "We're not." They look back in absolute wonder.

Sales Guy: "Great. Well how long have you lived here?" More teeth. More smile.

Prospect: "Five years." Still wondering what you're up to.

Sales Guy: "Cool. Well, if you did move, where would that be?" Teeth and smile continue.

Prospect: "Lakewood."

Sales Guy: "And when would that be?" Still smiling with those pearly whites.

Prospect: "In a couple of years."

Sales Guy: "Perfect. Well this is what I'll do for you. I'll put you on my mailing list and give you monthly updates on the recent sales and listings in your neighborhood. When you do plan on moving, you call me and I'll do a comparative market analysis so you'll know what money you have to work with. Sound like a plan?" Still smiling.

Prospect: "Sounds great." Now they're smiling.

Sales Guy: "It's a deal. Here's a magnet for your fridge."

Amazingly, every twenty houses or so, when a prospect was asked when they'd be moving, they'd look back in astonishment and say, "How did you know I was moving?" Bingo. You have a hot lead.

Stretching your comfort zone involves taking some risk now and then. In this case, the meek inherit very little. Go for it!

2. Anticipate problems -- Before your sale, negotiation or debate, anticipate inflection points, objections or problem areas. By simply being aware of what might happen during real time speed, you can get the feeling "Hot dog, everything is going as planned." as opposed to "Oh no, now what do I do?"

In the Age of Speed, if you are not prepared you lose. The fly-by-the-seat of their pants people will not be able to get away with their careless ways nearly as much. A rule of thumb here is to slow down before you speed up. Anticipation does not have to be an unconscious attribute. Anticipate scenarios. Pilots do it by ensuring they go through a pre-flight checklist. Doctors use well rehearsed sequences before any Emergency shows up on their door step or hospital bed. Physicians remember many sequences by using acronyms.

If you methodically slow down before the time you need to be "on" you will be a high performer at speed.

3. Breathe deeply -- Use simple physiology to your advantage. Oxygenate that five inches between your ears. There's a part of the brain called the amygdala and it is triggered into *fight or flight* with shallow breathing. Fight or flight is an instinctual stress response. If you hand over your reactions to instinct, get ready to flinch. Stay calm and flinchlessness is yours. So breathe deep before and during your sale, negotiation or debate.

Breathing is actually an anchor to your physiological state. Breath heavily in short, sharp breaths through the mouth and you send a signal to the amygdala to get ready for danger. Breathe slowly through your nose and your physiological anchor will react with a lower stress response.

Now get out there and conquer the flinch.

About the author:

Vince Poscente is best known for his ability to provide an invigorating message to organizations across the corporate landscape. Poscente helps them understand the challenge and turn speed to their advantage. You can find out more about Vince at www.vinceposcente.com