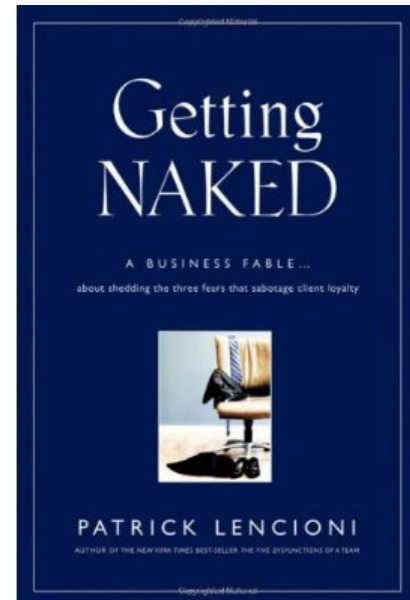


Dropping the Fear of Being Naked

Last week, we discussed [getting naked with our clients](#) by being humble and real with them as we work together to create value for each other. This usually has roadblocks associated with it, by what Patrick Lencioni calls the three fears. They are the fear of losing the business, the fear of being embarrassed, and the fear of feeling inferior. Let's discuss each one separately.



The fear of losing the business happens when fear prevents us from doing the difficult things that will actually keep the business – creating greater loyalty and trust with our clients. What people really want to know is that we are putting the highest priority on helping them over trying to make money. We lose their trust and respect when do something, or fail to do something, just to increase or maintain the business. When we get naked with a client, we are open to the possibility of losing the client, not being paid, or the client taking our ideas and not compensating us. This exposure actually builds trust and opens us to goodwill that we will generate if even in the short term it doesn't look like it.

The fear of being embarrassed happens when we don't want to look stupid or unknowing in front of others that are paying us to be knowledgeable. This happens even when we are afraid to ask a question because we may look less than if it seems everyone else knows the answer. The truth is, a lot of the

time others don't know and we are respected for asking the question. Lencioni says that this is rooted in pride and is about avoiding the appearance of ignorance. The naked service provider asks questions at the expense of getting laughed at, to make sure he or she is helping the client. They admit and even celebrate their lack of knowledge, because a cover-up is only protecting their intellectual ego and not helping the client.

The fear of being inferior is also about the ego, but is different in that it is about protecting the aspects of feeling important and our social standing relative to a client. Lencioni says, "It is completely natural for a service provider to yearn for respect and admiration, and have a disdain for being overlooked, condescended to, or treated as though we are inferior." We try to preserve this stature that is created in society by being the know-it-all and being above others in some ways. The naked service provider works to substitute this need of stature by putting themselves lower and being of service in whatever a client needs. When we put aside our egos and make the needs of others more important, this is the higher conscious approach, and respect and trust will follow.

Getting rid of the three fears boils down to being selfless and serving others at the expense of your own wants. This sounds like the way to not only make business relationships better, but our relationships overall. It sounds like there are more benefits to being naked than I originally thought. So are you going to undress your pride and ego and strip down for your clients?

Do You Get Naked with Your Clients?



I spent the past week in St. Thomas for my annual timeshare week. It is always a great getaway, and this one came and went with a lot of time at great beaches, meeting new people and doing some reading. I got to spend the night at Jost Van Dyke, which is something that I've always wanted to do. The time around Soggy Dollar Bar goes fast and you get dragged away, if you are there on a tour boat or take a ferry, just when things seem to be the most fun. Staying the night was a great way to relax and enjoy the new friends and amazing beach, and contemplate the opportunities the [new vertical](#) has for us at Efficiency.

The reading I got to do was very insightful and gave me several ideas to help me with my business. It was the book that [Jack Daly recommended](#) at the Nerve conference recently as the best sales book ever, which is called Getting Naked, by Patrick Lencioni. It wasn't what I was expecting, when it came to a book that is supposed to help you with selling. But it all came down to what we admire in people, and that is being real and humble. The book is told in a fable and it is a good read, with the format helping to make the points very clear.

What it comes down to, is that when the business consultant went in to do the sales presentation, it was actually a bunch of questions that dug into the business and the issues they were having. He gave away his advice, and did so without any commitment from the potential client. There was no price discussed, unless the client asked the question. This was all about adding value and showing the prospect that he was there

to help, and if they found his services of value, then they would engage said services. This went down to creating a successful practice without having to actually sell, at least in the traditional sense.

What is revealed from the fable is that people have three fears when selling. They are the fear of losing the business, the fear of being embarrassed, and the fear of feeling inferior. When you are trying to sell and protect yourself from these fears, it works to prevent us from building trust and loyalty with our clients. When you provide your services in more of this naked fashion, you are sharing humility, selflessness and transparency, which when shared does create a bond with others. This bond leads to a level of trust that builds real relationships with clients that last during good and bad times, and even when you charge more than the competition.

In the next blog I will discuss the three fears in more detail. In the meantime, are you being naked when you are working with your clients?