

Provocation Deep Dive

Earning conversations by removing needy tone

with Jeff Molander

Founder 



Markus Spiske

Welcome to lesson 2 in our Provocation Deep Dive -- Earning conversations by removing needy tone. What you're going to take away from this lesson is more awareness. A sense of awareness that may bother you... make you uncomfortable. Because, most likely, your words reflect your state of need. Example: Do any of these words sound familiar to you?

Very happy to chat with
you about this further if
you're interested.



Very happy to chat with you about this further if you're interested. Very happy. Very. Could all this happiness make you sound desperate? It might. Especially if you follow it with "I look forward to hearing from you."

Very happy to chat with
you **about this further** if
you're interested.



And this part here... about this further. What the heck are these words even doing here? More words means more marketing tone.. and, in this case, more desperate. More needy.

Very happy to chat with
you **if** you're interested.



But even if we remove these words we're left with "if you're interested." If. If is a terrible word. A weak word. It serves one purpose: To tell the reader "I have no idea." When it comes to using words, in emails, in voicemails and in general, every word counts.

Example pattern:

If {{company}} is looking for solutions to _____ [insert your customers' problem] MyCompany LLC is here to assist you with...



Example: If your company is looking for solutions to _____ [insert your customers' problem] MyCompany LLC is here to assist you with..." whatever. If literally reveals how you have no idea. Think about it. That's the nature of if. "If your company is looking for solutions" says "I have no idea." It's like screaming "this is a cut and pasted email." It's like saying to the prospect "I'm flying blind and I'm too lazy to do a bit of homework on you. You're not worth it." All from this little two letter word! Paired with a meeting request and it's a slap across the face. You do not respect them nor yourself.

I'll be in the area
Please let me have 15 minutes
If you don't like what you see
Why not take a chance, we really can
I know once you see what we
It's a brief online demo
The worst that can happen
At least get a free lunch
Feel free to



How about these phrases? I'll be in the area. Please let me have 15 minutes. If you don't like what you see. Why not take a chance, we really can. I know once you see what we... It's a brief online demo... The worst that can happen... At least get a free lunch... Do you see how these words and phrases subvert your ability to sound worthy of speaking to?

Really quick....

with Jeff Molander
Founder 

Markus Spiske

Ok. Really quick... you are not here to hear about me. But I want you to remember: I spend my days studying how people like you are inventing fresh effective ways to start conversations with prospects. I started Communications Edge to find and share better conversation-starting tactics with you. Because customers are really good at avoiding salespeople. So my answer is this: Let's research. Find the tactics being used that most people don't know about yet. And practice them... together. I'm a researcher and practitioner and I geek out on finding new ways to get conversations started using science-based methodology. But...I'm not a guru. So I want you to disagree with me. Thoughtfully of course.



If you feel I'm misinformed or misguided push back. Right below this video in comments, in the community Forum ... or send me an email. I'm a learner too and I'm like you -- trying to figure out how to best go forward in these difficult times. I don't want to overlook your experience. Disagree. Tell me you see it differently. I'm open because I have to be. It's how we learn. Ok. Here's my promise to you: No guru bullshit. I don't have all the answers. What I do have is the collective experience of people across the planet...

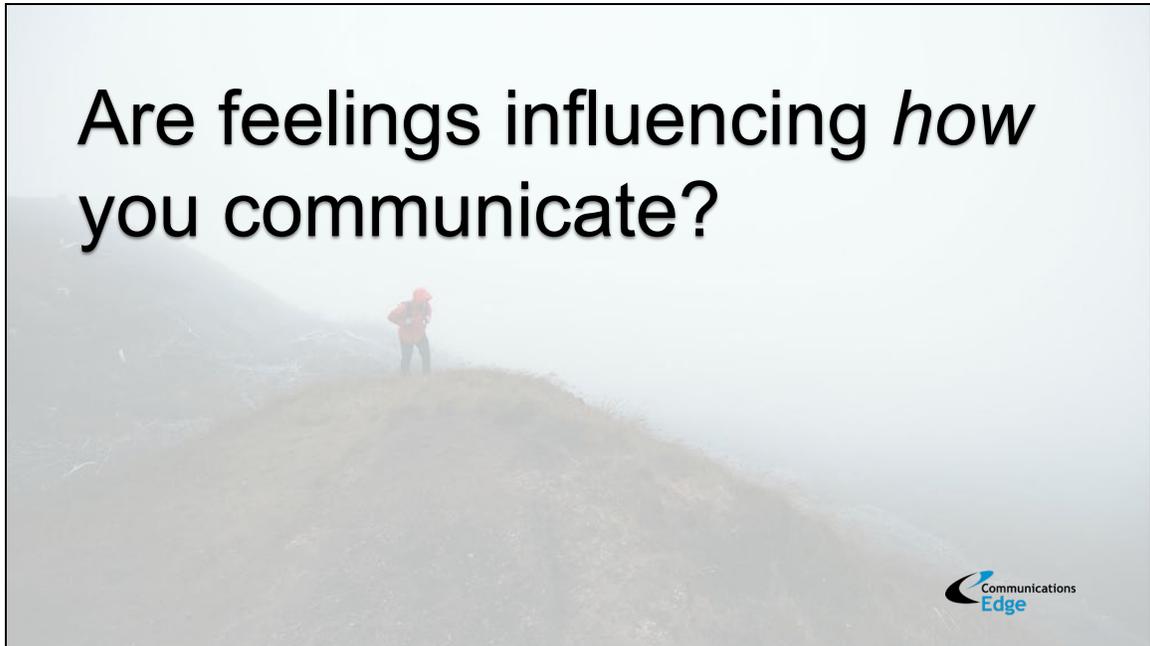


.... everyone in our Spark Selling Academy community. Our students. However, I am a student of our students. That is what makes me qualified to talk about this stuff. All of us are, together, specialists in understanding how to get conversations started... and advance them... faster and easier. What I'm sharing today is based on our *collective* experience.

Slide 10



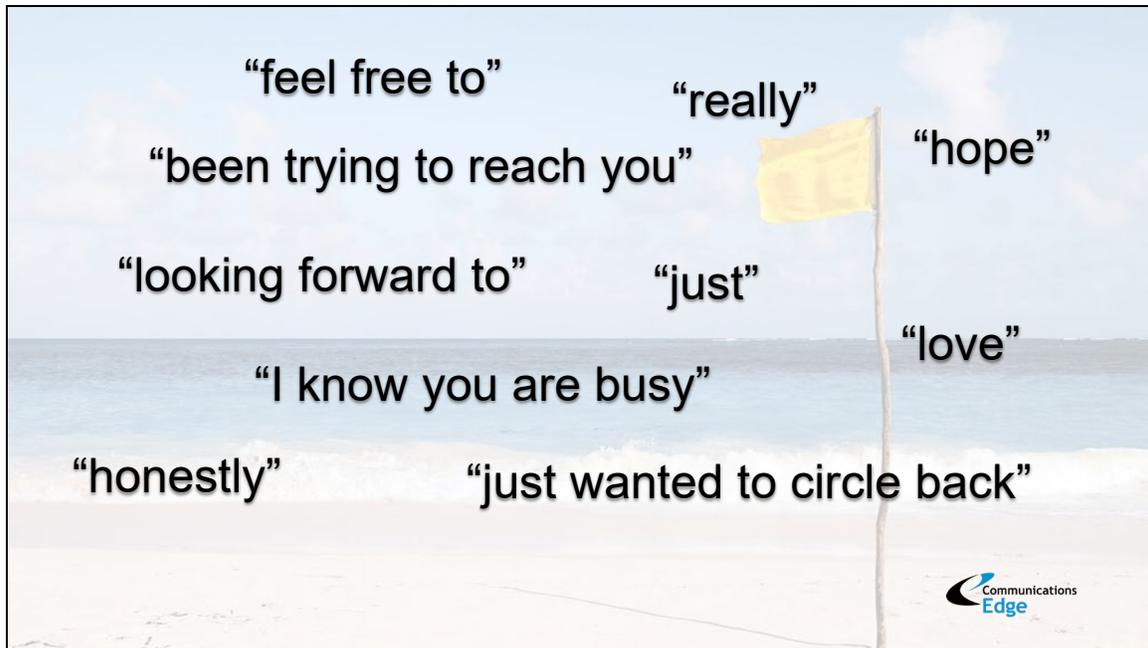
Ok. We're all trying to keep positive minded in an increasingly difficult time. In uncertain times. We're sending a lot of emails out and, lately, not hearing back from prospects enough. So I have to ask:



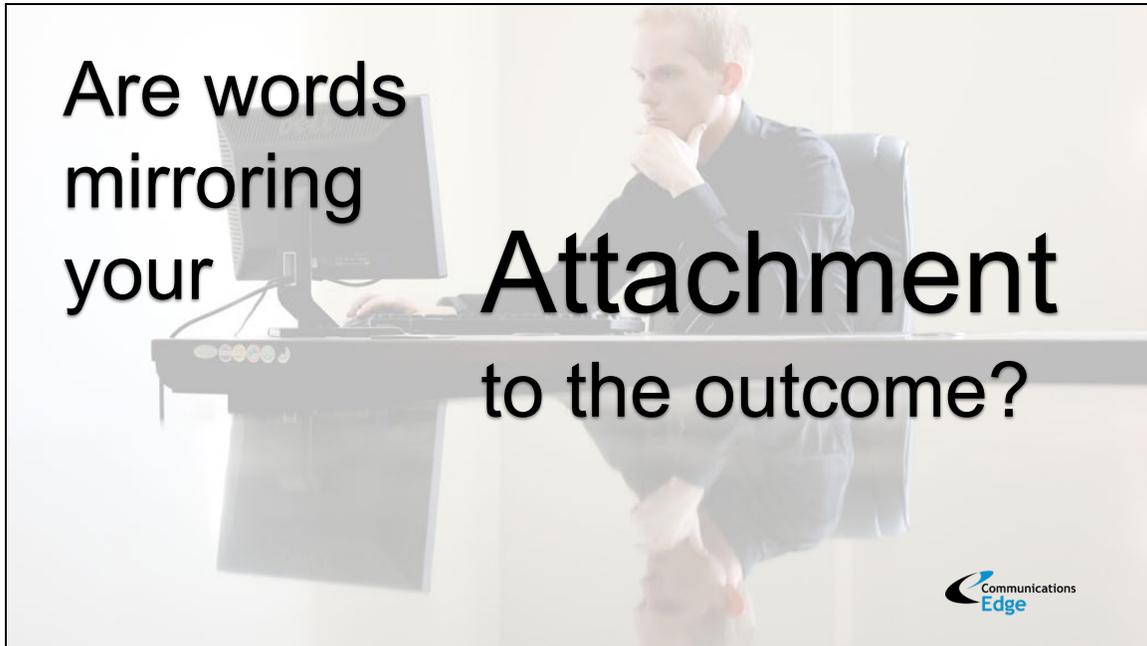
Are your feelings influencing how you communicate -- when sending LinkedIn messages, email messages and also in your voicemails? Are your feelings influencing how you communicate? For example...



Is your neediness chasing customers away?... causing them to ignore you? Now I don't know your mental state... from day to day. But I am confident you are like me this way: We have occasional moments when we feel desperate. And the negative feelings associated with those moments go one place: Into your words. Your written and spoken words.



Words like these. “Feel free to.” Do you really need to tell prospects they’re free to do whatever you want them to do? Because telling them, “Feel free to” borders on sounding desperate. And when you combine the use of one of these words or phrases with others... when they are found together inside a message.... look out. The message begins to scream needy. You’ll also notice how many conventional templates... that are recommended by various sources ranging from software companies to self-appointed LinkedIn experts and sales gurus... you’ll notice how many of these words are found in many canned templates. “I know you are busy” is a terrible phrase we often find in follow-up templates. We’re told we need to empathize with prospects.. which is a dangerous idea because it often results in writing phrases like “I know you’re busy” and “just wanted to circle back”... phrases that make us sound needy... too needy. Not to mention sounding like everyone else. Hope. Love. These are terrible, terrible words you should avoid. Nobody wants to hear about your hope... about what you’re hoping for? Are you kidding? And love. “I’d love to .. fill in the blank.” Of course you would love to offer a free demo or whatever it is ... you’re a sales person. Be aware of these words. If you take one thing away from this workshop this is it: These words are poisonous... for some very scientific, psychology-driven reasons. These words scream needy.



So... is it possible --- are words mirroring your attachment to the desired outcome (a meeting and/or a quick sale)?

“That’s great, [name], I would love to share more...”



For example, a student I’ve been coaching recently sent this in response to a first reply from a client... “That’s great. I would love to share more...” Now, I admit it is very exciting when replies come right? When they reply inviting you to reply again YIPPEE! But that moment can get the best of us... and we can end up coming off too eager, too excited... like we care so much we might just start to sound desperate. And desperate is not attractive in courtship. So sending back “That’s great, I would love to share more...” is not the type of tone you want to present. Hold back your enthusiasm. Beware of this kind of word use. Also, as we discussed in the Quickstart Course, beware of calls to action. Words at the end of your first, second or third messages... words like, “is this of interest?” or “would you like to learn more?” These types of phrases demonstrate two things: One, what you’ve written before these words are so weak you feel the need to ask if you’ve provoked them. It shows you don’t believe in your words ability to provoke interest... so much so that you have to ask...

Is this of interest?
Would you like to learn more?
If you're interested, feel free to _____.
Any interest in a short call?
If any of these interest you, please let me know.

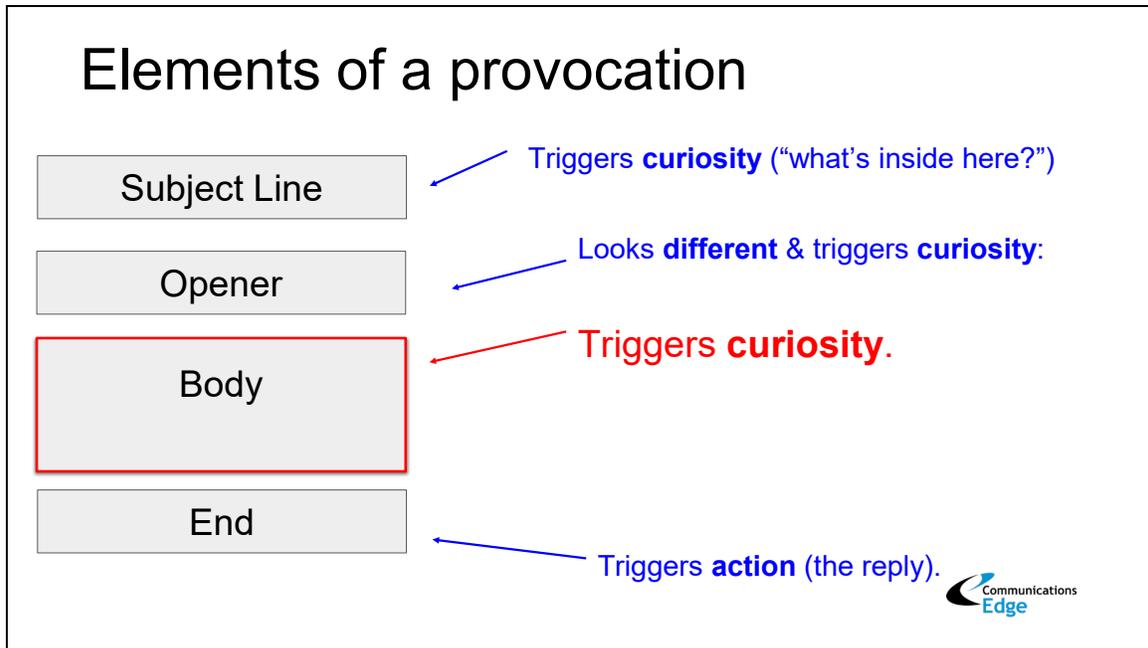
"I'm so needy"



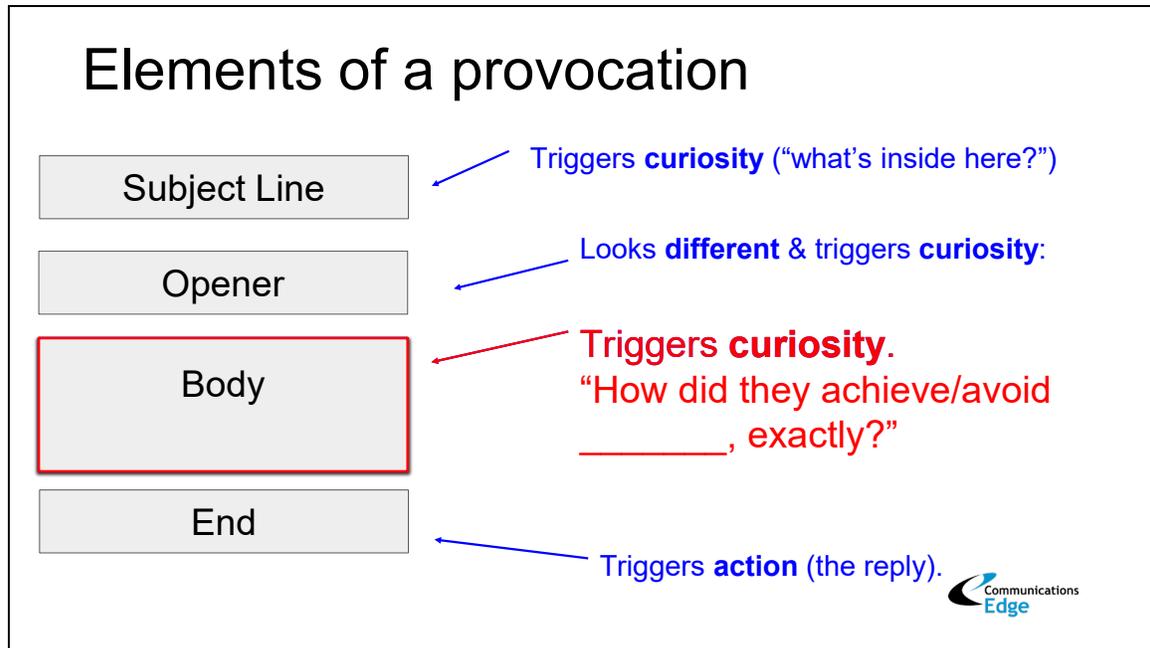
Is this of interest? Would you like to learn more? If you're interested, feel free to.. Any interest in a short call? Please let me know. Consider how these kinds of phrases can make you sound needy... if not desperate. Our job is to pique curiosity -- to make ourselves of interest. Our job is to help them want to learn more... not ask them if they want to know more and risk looking like we care too much about our outcome. The more you ask for what you want the less you're going to get it. It's human nature. Just like a good first date. In courtship we work on attracting customers (our ideal life mate) to the idea of talking to us... being a good idea.



We attract them to the idea of talking to us. We are not out to convince them. Not out to persuade them. That looks desperate. Instead, to attract them to the idea of having a short conversation to see if having a longer conversation makes sense... or not. Instead of persuading you'll see better results by provoking curiosity in the prospect. This is the #1 most important concept our community continues to learn lately. We are finding ways to help customers persuade themselves to make the decision. But this requires you to think in non-conventional ways... in innovative, psychology driven ways. Let's come back to the process we follow... the elements of a successful provocation... this is how we spark curiosity. ...



Let's focus on the body section... where we trigger curiosity using a dozen or so different options. Now, one goal we might aim at is to attempt to solicit this response: "How did they achieve that?"



And one of the options... one of the ways we can elicit this response... is by using “social proof” or, in other words, a case example. A super short story where you really moved the needle... you really delivered... for one of your customers. All based on having earned the right to provoke in the Opener section. Here in the body we may apply something that usually looks like this....

EXAMPLE 1:

We cut [CLIENT]'s hiring time in half, from an average of 21 days to 9 or less -- by allowing them to screen potential hires more conveniently with video interviews.



We cut (insert your client's name) hiring time in half, from an average of 21 days to 9 or less -- by allowing them to screen potential hires more conveniently with video interviews. This is an actual example. In your situation your social proof statement will look different. But...the problem with "social proof" is bias. And that weakens your tone. You may not see the bias here, yet, but here's what I mean. We see it in resumes. We see it in LinkedIn profiles. Everyone has a good reference -- or two. Faked or real. Case studies & storytelling are no different. So, put your customer hat on firmly: Where are the weaknesses in this "social proof element?" Anyone?

EXAMPLE 1:

We cut [CLIENT]'s hiring time in half, from an average of 21 days to 9 or less -- by allowing them to screen potential hires more conveniently with video interviews.



We. The reference to yourself. Referencing yourself, when telling a social proof story, is always going to weaken your tone. Because the reference to yourself is removing the customer's ability to focus on the provocation--the story. The amazing outcome which you created... which they may want to understand more about. The how. Another example...

EXAMPLE 2:

Before working with us, [CLIENT] was wasting \$690,800 a quarter on unnecessary printing costs. **We were able to** help them eliminate these costs why also backing up all their [FILE TYPE] documents in one central location.



BEFORE WORKING WITH US [our client] was wasting \$690,800 a quarter on unnecessary printing costs. **WE WERE ABLE TO** help them eliminate these costs why also backing up all their documents in one central location. Do you see how these words do nothing but talk about YOU and diminish the impact of this story? Because it sounds too much like you care... like you need to persuade. Like **MARKETING** copy. Instead, strong Sales Copywriting helps customers persuade themselves -- by eliminating words displaying bias and neediness. They don't care about YOU. They don't care about what the client's life was like before you. They only care about the waste and how that waste disappeared -- and a fringe benefit appeared.

EXAMPLE 2: IMPROVED

ABC Corp. was wasting \$690,800 a quarter on unnecessary printing costs. **But by making one small change they pocketed that cash --** all while centralizing document backups.



Like this. ABC Corp. was wasting \$690,800 a quarter on unnecessary printing costs. But by making one small change, they pocketed that cash -- all while centralizing document backups. I shortened this up a bit. Boom. Nothing about your company. Do you see how the story really pops now? It's much stronger and there's no needy tone here. No persuasive marketing tone.

EXAMPLE 2: **IMPROVED**

ABC Corp. was wasting \$690,800 a quarter on unnecessary printing costs. **By making one small change they pocketed that cash -- all while centralizing document backups.**



And here... one small change. We're not going to tell the reader what that change was... in this case. Sometimes we do. That's what makes the Spark technique a practice. Sometimes we need to give the scent of "the how" to entice the reader... to provoke them... to tease a bit. It depends on your context. And this is why getting involved in our Academy community is so important... so we can address your specific challenge with you. Ok. One small change... that's a curiosity element we've inserted here.

EXAMPLE 2: **IMPROVED Alternate**

ABC Corp. was wasting \$690,800 a quarter on unnecessary printing costs. **By taking an unconventional approach they pocketed that cash --** all while centralizing document backups.



We can also come at it this way. By taking an unconventional approach they pocketed that cash... There are other ways we practice creation of provocations. But this social proof is more effective because of its tone. It's neutral tone. So ... can you copy this? Sure. But you'll probably struggle. Because it's a practice not a template or a playbook. You need to build a new habit of communication style. Across email, phone and meetings too.



So instead of sounding needy use words that show you care less. Of course you want the reply... but don't want it SO much.



In fact stop asking for meetings. Get comfortable with removing meeting requests... in your cold email. Be at peace with their saying no to a conversation... and write it into the tone of your email. Let the prospect know you're at peace with their decision--no matter what it is... to delete or reply to you. And acknowledge their right to choose. Use words that put them in control. It's a huge mental trigger... acknowledging the customer's right to choose a conversation – or not. Because so few do it. Letting them know you're ok if they don't want to talk is a huge way to stand out in the inbox. Let's say you are following up on a customer who's gone radio silent on you. You delivered the proposal and now no response to calls and emails. They've ghosted you.

“If it’s bad news for us, I can take it.”



“If it’s bad news for us I can take it.” This is just one example of how you might word it. There are a dozen different ways to practice this kind of tone. And not just cold emails... also on follow up. Sending prospects words like this shows you are at peace with their negative decision---you just need to know. Do you think you can do this? And do you think you’ll get more response? I am sure you will.

Not sure it's a fit for you. Open to a short email exchange to see if a larger conversation is warranted?

If not, no worries.



Another example of strong, neutral, sales copy... “Not sure it’s a fit for you. Open to a short email exchange to see if a larger conversation is warranted? If not, no worries.” This shows interest in speaking with the client but also acknowledges their right to choose the discussion ... and being at peace with their refusal to engage. This tends to pull. If any of you practice Sandler this is very similar to what is called a “negative reverse” mental trigger. Another way of looking at it: Practice non-hunger.

Practice non-hunger.

Leverage strategic *dis-*
interest.



Leverage strategic *dis*interest. Sales expert Tony Hughes calls this The Law of Principled Disinterest. Create desire. Pull. Become interesting rather than interested. Radiate confidence and always be willing to walk away. You don't need the business.... let them know you know it. Earning the conversation... getting response... is mostly about creating a pattern disrupt (*AVOID* saying what customers expect). Not sounding needy.

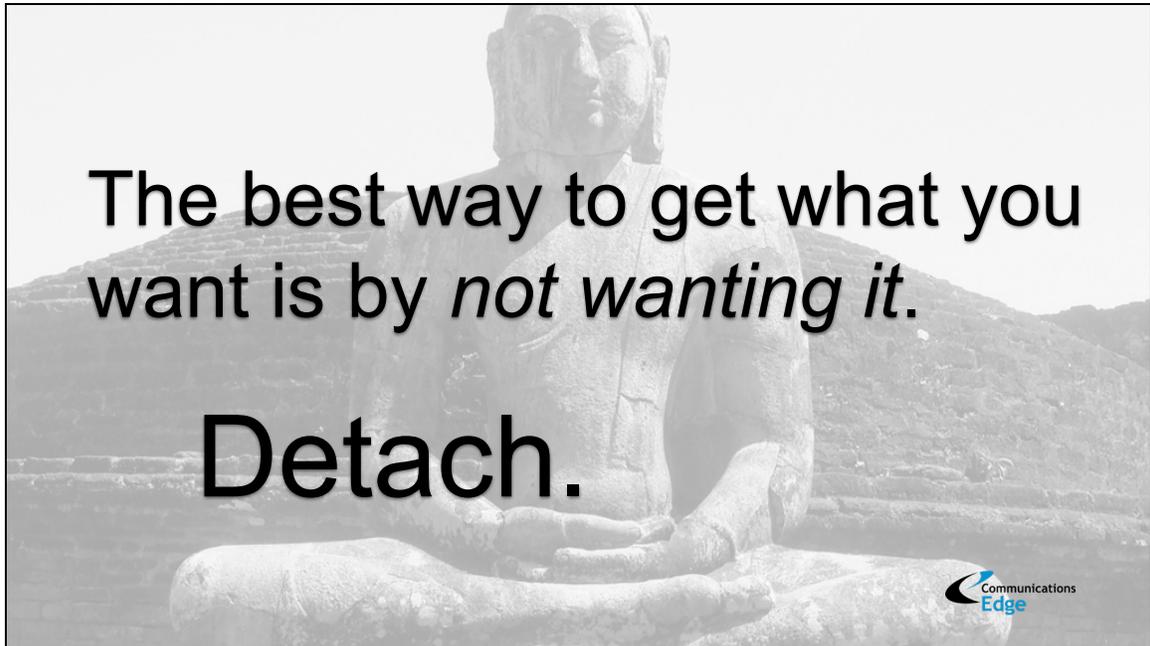
Creating a **pattern disrupt**

(avoid saying what customers expect)

“Hi. This is a cold call. Care to hang up?”



Think about it this way: Get in the habit of telling prospects things they don't want to hear like flaws in your solution. Like, the truth. Vulnerability and transparency open doors and speed up the trust building process. You'll stick out like a sore thumb and they'll be more open to talking. Now I know this might be new to some of you with us today... and it seems counterintuitive. But stick with me. Because here's what we work on in the Academy... Detaching.



The best way to get what you want is by not wanting it. Detaching from the outcome you desire. Caring less. We're constantly focusing on this -- supporting each other In the community Forum... when we come together in live workshops... when I coach you one-on-one. Detaching is not easy. But we must. Here's why. Think about it: focusing on goals ties you up emotionally. Right?

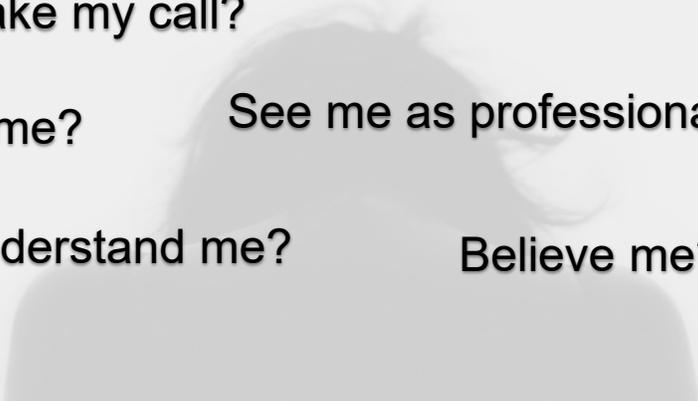
Will they...

Delete this email?

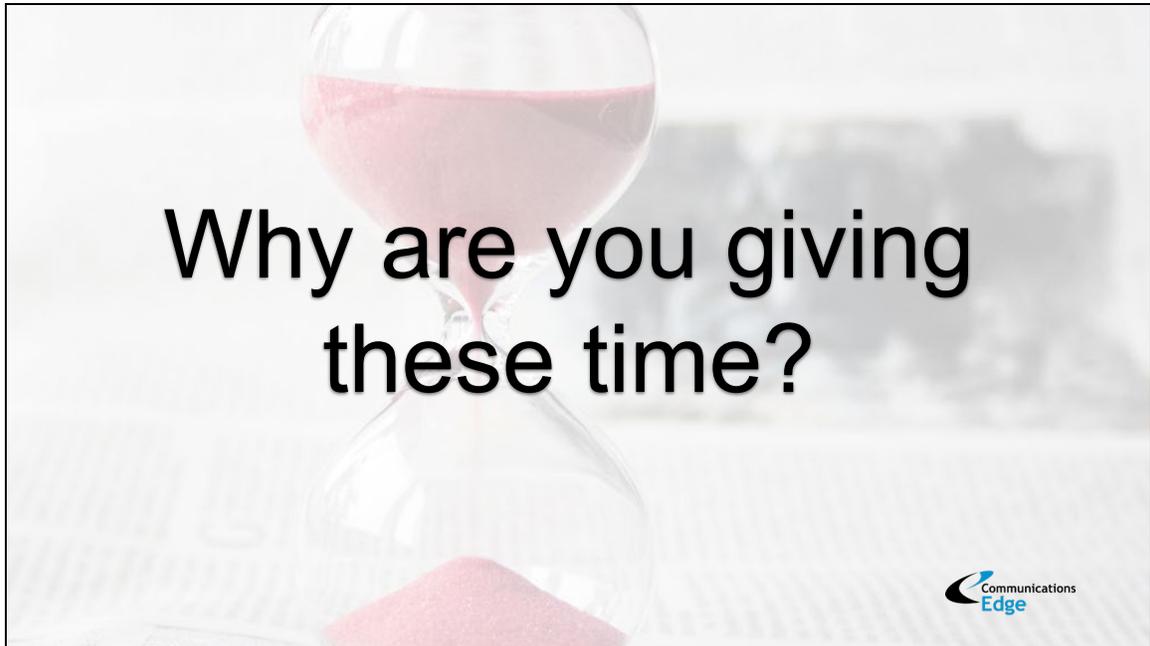
Take my call?

Like me? See me as professional?

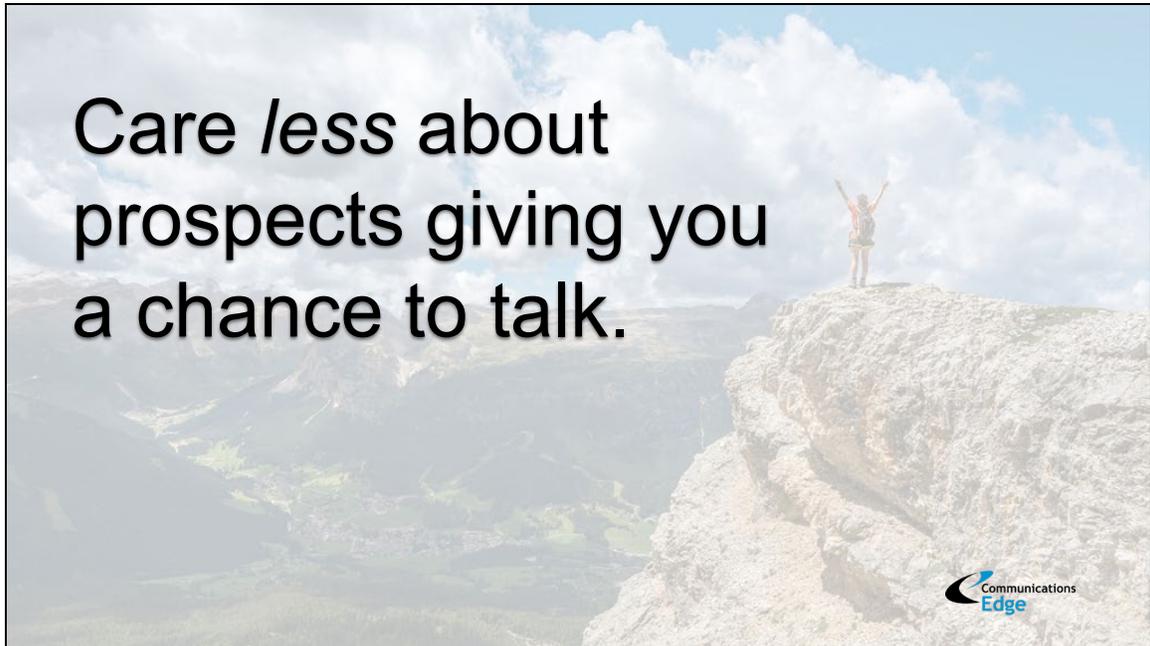
Understand me? Believe me?



We ask ourselves...



But why are you giving these thoughts time? The more time we allow these thoughts the more these thoughts work their way into our messages... in ways we cannot see very well. But they are there and are causing trouble.



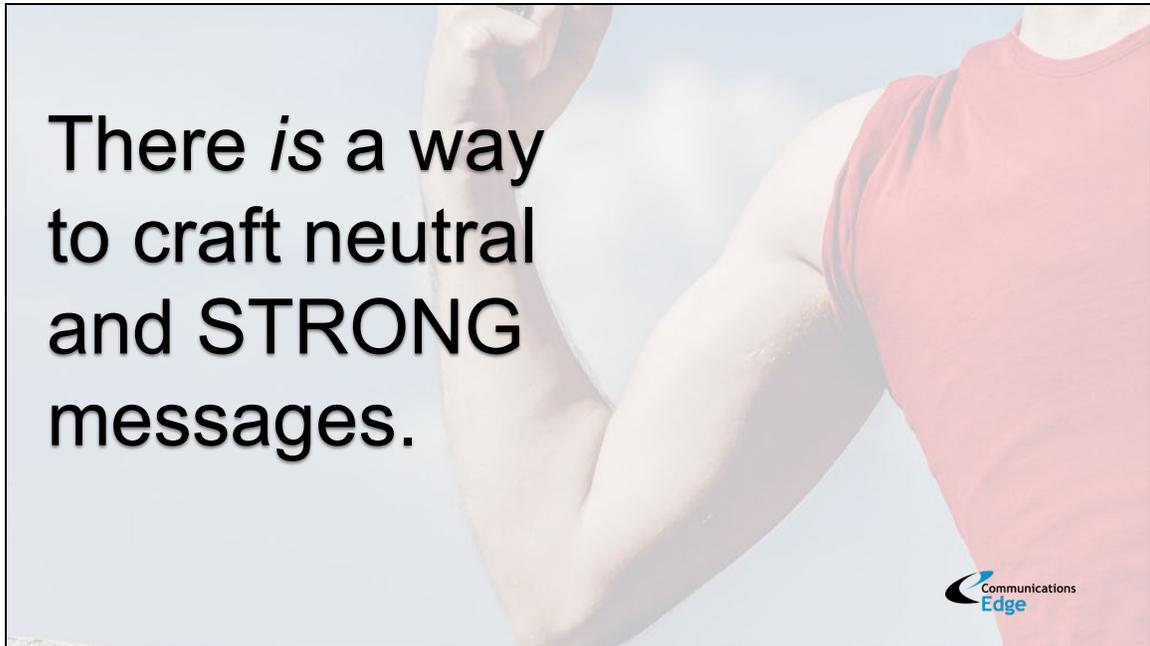
So... care less about prospects giving you a chance to talk. Adopt a detached Mindset: Dump the needy mindset by changing your focus and intent from closing the sale (self focused) to calming the physiology of the brain (client focused) giving you confidence and capability. Instead...

Focus energy on HOW you'll
get a conversation started.

(nothing else)



Focus energy on how you'll get a conversation started. Nothing else. Because the root of all misery is attachment. Needing. It's a basic human instinct. We're flawed that way. Nothing we can do about it.



But there is a way to craft neutral and strong messages... messages that don't make us look needy or don't risk making us look needy. So I ask you to prioritizing the removal of neediness... as a habit... so you can start sparking conversations more often. And always look strong in any context not just cold outreach.

It starts with **abandoning** these:

“I was hoping to introduce my...”

“I would love to...”

“just reaching out to see...”

“I imagine your inbox gets filled...”

“circle back”

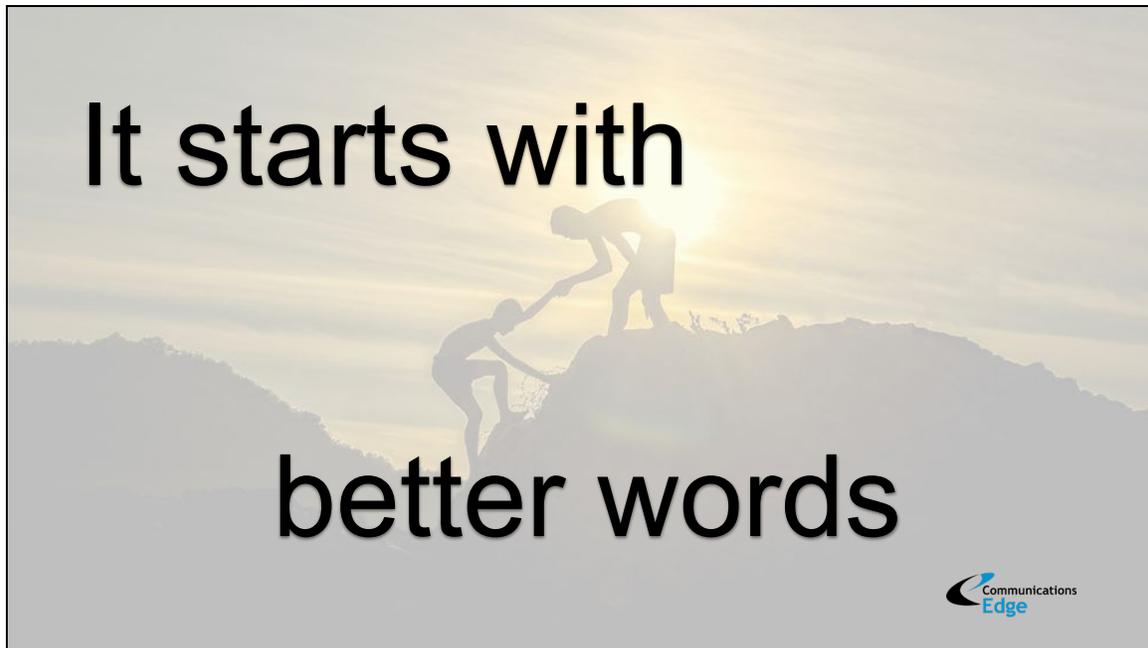
“following up from my previous...”

“feel free to”

“really”



It starts with abandoning weak words...



It starts with learning better words. Better positive mental triggers. Today we spent time on negative and positive mental triggers. There are so many more of both we didn't have time to dive into. Remember: Don't ask them "are you interested" or don't tell them you look forward to hearing their response. Beware of using the words please and, yes, thank you... be aware of the frequency of use. This is the subject of another lesson. Watch for it. Words matter. Plus, remember: the more you ask for what you want the less you're going to get it. Just like in courtship: Work on attracting customers to the idea of talking to us... being a good idea.



Attract them to the idea of talking. Let them decide. Be short about it. Provoke. Don't persuade. That looks desperate. Instead, attract them to the idea of having a short conversation to see if having a longer conversation makes sense... or not. But this requires you to think in non-conventional ways... in innovative, psychology driven ways.



See you in lesson #3

Why building trust in email isn't effective (and what to do instead)

Jeff Molander
Founder



Communications
Edge

Markus Spiske

Ok with that we'll wrap and see you in lesson 3: Why Building Trust isn't Effective -- And What to Do Instead. Adding value with every message? Building trust by looking credible? These conventional tactics never started enough conversations to begin with. And lately they're not working much at all. These marketing best practices have become toxic to sales outreach success. See you there!