

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLOOM

Excuses Are Costly

recently moved into a new home in a new state. It's always an adventure finding craftsmen to do work when you're starting anew, and I had to hire an electrician. The first guy to come out was a fascinating case study in what makes people tick. I needed a data line run to my office. He explained the problems in fishing the line. I had a light fixture in the basement I wanted to switch from upstairs, and again, he found the roadblocks to doing that. By the time he told me about the problems with installing an extra receptacle in the island, I knew this guy was more interested in finding excuses than solutions.



How do people become that negative? He was carrying a boat anchor through life and hurting any chances of success. The next guy to come out gave creative solutions, and he got the job.

Do negative thoughts dominate your day? Do you find yourself thinking more of what you can avoid instead of what you can tackle? As I've called on music retailers, I've realized that the modus operandi for many is to make excuses instead of taking action. Here's a common scenario:

Me: I see you sold that guitar almost immediately and made a bunch of money doing so. Good job! How's about another?

Dealer: Not now. It's the summer doldrums.

Me: Wow, you made it through. Fall is finally here. Are you ready for that guitar?

Dealer: I can't even think about it now. It's band rental season.

Me: How'd rental season go?

Dealer: Great. We were up 20 percent.

Me: Congratulations. Hey, I've got that order for the guitar I've been sitting on.

Dealer: We're doing inventory this weekend. Call me Monday for the order.

Me: How'd inventory go?

Dealer: All done. Would you mind calling back in November? I want to get that guitar in for Christmas.

Me: The season is right around the corner. Ready for that guitar?

Dealer: I'm waiting for The NAMM Show to do my buying. Look, I get it: Business is tough. Caution is smart. That said, putting off cash-producing decisions causes bad things to get worse. Of course band rental season's a busy time. But while you're

renting toots and flutes, the world doesn't stand still for your combo business. Especially busy times call for more intense, focused effort. It would be lovely if tasks came to us in neat little packets, but it doesn't work that way. Sometimes, you'll have time on your hands, and sometimes, you'll have to leap buildings in a single bound.

I did the same stuff when I was in retail. I stubbornly refused to so much as take phone calls from reps during the holidays, even when it wasn't that busy. I wonder what deals I'd passed up.

I recently called a dealer to tell him, literally, how to get money back on inventory he'd purchased. But the person answering the phone told me he was too busy to take calls and didn't need anything. Later, I saw the owner had posted on his personal Facebook page that afternoon.

When you constantly take a negative approach to daily challenges, you're often avoiding the confrontation that's part of the decision-making process. And avoiding decisions often leads to decisions being made for you — and not within your control. Like the electrician, you may be squandering opportunities. Why not try a yes-I-can attitude and see if you can't take control of your own destiny? **MI**

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