

The following is an excerpt from Ty Bello's forthcoming e-Book
"25 Tips your Mother Taught you" available soon!

Introduction (by Kristen Bissontz)

Mothers. We all have one. Sometimes we like them, sometimes we don't. But we always love them. Mothers are full of advice. From early childhood, they fill our heads with the unique mom-ism's that only our siblings could appreciate. It's funny, but some of those things Mom repeated over and over and over weren't meant just for our formative growing years. Much of her counsel is timeless. As professional individuals, we can glean some of the wisdom and insight that God gives just to Mothers.

As a mom, I have some of my own "mom-ism's" that my children will laugh about when they are adults. One of their least favorite comes when they've sustained a minor bump or bruise and come screaming as if in extreme pain. "You're not bleeding or on fire...I guess you'll live." This apparent lack of compassion is used in our home to help distinguish between the need for EMS and a simple hug. I've yet to encounter a hemorrhaging child engulfed in flames.

We hope you enjoy this work for what it is: a humorous memoir of the guidance heaped upon our heads as children translated into timeless advice for all. Look for our first installment from *25 Things...* to begin this Thursday.

#1: Stand tall and sit up straight

With two little boys in our home, it took on a little different flavor: “Scoot your buns up and sit up straight.” This was what my wife, Barb, said when the boys were getting their haircuts at home.

As sales people, we need to exude professionalism. This applies to our appearance, our manner of dress, our diction and vocabulary, and our posture. First impressions can be lasting. When a potential customer sees a sales representative hunched over or slouching, it gives the impression that the sales rep simply doesn't care that much about what they are doing. The representative is labeled “unfocused” or “unprofessional”. A sale is not simply made from exchanged words and needs. Perception is reality and a wrong impression can influence the quality of interactions between salesperson and referral source. Poor interactions lead to poor sales.

As sales professionals, we are trained to interpret body language. We understand what constitutes an open or closed position and we can usually cater our conversations based on this knowledge. Referral sources and customers can be pretty adept at “people reading” as well. Body language can scream either “I'm a Professional” or “I'm a Slouch.” Which are you?

“Scoot your buns up and sit up straight!” (B. Bello, mom)

Mom's Tips

- **Stand tall, slouching conveys disinterest or disrespect**
- **Refrain from crossing your arms, this promotes a closed or defensive position**
- **Maintain eye contact.**
- **Use hand gestures to keep interest. Moderate your gestures and don't over-do it, balance is good.**

#2 Don't interrupt when someone else is talking

This was always a shock for me when my Mom would say this phrase. It's not like I interrupted her *every* time she spoke...

In every sales call there is tremendous energy and emotion. You are passionate about your product or service, and the customer is meeting you point for point. You try to drive deeper into the customer to

understand their specific needs. Sometimes, words collide and you find that you are talking over the other person. Focus and self-control are hard for even the most seasoned sales professional. You never know when the dreaded “talk-over” will happen. In that moment, you realize you have one of two options: talk louder with more force, or surrender the conversation. Many of us, unfortunately, do the former because we can’t help but “be right” and have the last word.

However, as a true sales *professional* you can (and should) yield the conversation and offer control to the customer. Why? Because they are always right? No, because Mom always told you not to interrupt when someone else is talking. (It makes you wonder, was your customer raised by a cup of coffee? Because *they* would never yield the conversation to *you*! The truth is, they, like you, were raised by a wonderful mom and even heard the same saying. But buried deep in this early training, their mom was sending them signals that said, “Don’t interrupt when someone else is talking...except if it is a sales rep.)

Common courtesy is always the right thing to do and anytime you are in a “talk-over” situation, listen to Mom (she was right). Rather than getting caught in the war of words, stop talking. Apologize. Listen. Take note of what the customer is saying to you. Ask clarifying questions. Rephrase what they said so they know you are listening to them. Turn the situation into an honest conversation instead of a shouting match. Your customer will be impressed with your desire to engage them instead of compete with them.

#3 You have something on your face; let me clean that with my spit

My mom was always quick with a saliva-soaked tissue. Yes, it was highly unsanitary; but Mom had good intentions. She was trying to wipe away any blemish or stain that would make me appear less than perfect in public.

We need to do the same with our image as sales professionals. We can all testify to the stories of representatives who have, for one reason or another, lost credibility in the work arena. A blunder or poor choice has allowed that person to become the fodder for gossip and an embarrassment to their employer. Once a person is labeled as such, it is near impossible to remove the stigma.

On the flip side, we all know someone who has garnered great admiration and respect. Early in my career as a sales professional I met such a person. His name was Max. Max was a remarkable role model. He had the respect of his customers, his colleagues, and even his competition. Max was a true professional. I quickly realized what made Max so different: Max lived by the Golden Rule and really did unto other as he would have done unto himself. He was humble, gracious, respectful, and genuinely helpful.

Certain blemishes or stains can be washed away, others never can. The best “stain fighter” around is to avoid situations that could tarnish your image. Be gracious and humble. Help others. Ask to be accountable. Be polite and speak kindly to everyone.

Mom’s Tips

- **Don’t burn any bridges: you never know from where your future business comes, or who your next co-workers might be. Your reputation precedes you with clients and competition alike.**
- **Integrity: let your “yes” be yes and your “no” be no**
- **Be truthful, need I say more?**

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