

It Doesn't Mean Being Taken Advantage Of

By Bob Burg, The Co-Author of the Go-Giver

When discussing The Go-Giver methodology during presentations at corporate conferences I'm often asked, "Bob, all of this is fine and well if you're dealing with another person who believes in win/win, but what if you're not?"

In other words, maybe this customer is the type who will try and take advantage of you. They are not respectful in the way they communicate. Maybe even – dare I say – they are less than honest with you.

I believe this question is based on the false premise that because we (you and I) operate from a foundation of win/win, somehow that sets us up to be abused by those who don't. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Doing business this way has nothing to do with being anyone's doormat, a martyr, or being self-sacrificial in any way.

So, to answer the question: What if they themselves don't follow this philosophy? One might advise, "just don't do business with that person or company."

That's certainly an option.

However, for most, and for a variety of reasons, working within these situations is a necessity. (Of course, if what they are proposing is illegal or unethical immediately cease the relationship.) While the majority of people are good, win/win people, there are certainly those who are not. It's important to acknowledge that and act accordingly.

Handling This Productively and Effectively

Here are three suggestions that'll be helpful:

1. **Maintain Your Class and Values:** Continue to operate from a high-level of thought, action, and integrity. Stay polite and scrupulously honest. That's right; even if that's not a high value for them, it is still for you.
2. **Refuse That Which Could Harm You:** Politely say "no" when what is being proposed is not in your best and highest interest. Do this, not with anger, but with calm and tact.
3. **Stay alert:** If, for whatever reason, you feel they cannot be trusted then don't trust them. While typically I would say not to let on, there are certain situations in which you must tactfully communicate this. You'll need to be the judge of that.

Hint A: Don't do this by saying "I don't trust you." Rather, in responding to an inappropriate request you might say, "I'm not comfortable with..." or other phrases that communicate the point without causing confrontation.



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Hint B: At times, you will need to verbally (though still tactfully) communicate the lack of trust you feel. For example, "John, unfortunately, as much as I enjoy the idea that we can do business together, I don't get the feeling that you're as interested in a win/win as I am." He'll get the picture but won't be offended because of the way you said it.

Life is life and we need to know how to deal with all types. So long as you understand and are willing to set the proper frame, you'll find that you – at best – pulling them up to your level and – at worst – can protect yourself while providing the exceptional value you always provide.

Being very profitable as a result!

