

Rapid Influence! ...or They Will End Up Regretting Having Talked With You

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People are terrified they will screw up. Almost all decisions come down to *"I don't want to screw up and be seen as stupid."*

Get past that and you can influence others.

Influence: Boot Camp 10th Anniversary in Las Vegas is just around the corner. Dealing with regret in advance and in arrears is one of the most important factors in being influential in the moment. Therefore you'll learn some pretty important stuff in Las Vegas. But there's some material you really need to have now.



OK, first let's get inside the head of what they are thinking.

- "If I do this I'm an idiot..."
- "I shouldn't do this..."
- "I wish I wouldn't have this decision to make..."
- "I'll regret it..."
- "I know this is going to be a mistake..."
- **"It's all going to go wrong and I will get blamed..."**

How do Influencers tend to screw up their presentations or simple communication with arguably superior knowledge?

Getting Past 3 Levels of Regret

There are three levels of regret in the human psyche that I want you to dig into today.

I want to show you how to break through the walls of regret.

More than that, you will learn all 3 levels, how they developed, how **the fear of regret stops the processes of influence and persuasion**; and even more importantly, how *the fear of regret erodes the spirit of the person*.

The feeling of regret is something that people do almost anything to avoid.

That's a scientific fact.

When people feel like they are going to make "the biggest mistake of their life," they tend to say, "no."

The biggest mistake is the one that comes from the decision they face right now in this moment.

Interesting huh?

When people feel they might regret doing something, you can assume that they will say "No."

OK, now set that aside for right now and you'll find out how to apply this to everything YOU do, so people will never regret working with you!

If you want to motivate others or simply make the sale, you'll need to get past the levels of regret. I'll show you that in a minute but first ponder two things.

"As you grow older, you'll find the only things you regret are the things you didn't do."

Why is it that as people age, they look back and say, "I wish I would have....?"

You rarely hear anyone say, "Geez, I wish I wouldn't have..."

People Deeply Regret Their Own Inertia...

From the long view back, people regret *not* doing things. They regret not taking even the smallest risks and chances.

They regret their inertia when it came to something outside of their normal everyday life.

Why didn't they simply do it when they had an opportunity?

When influencing others, address THIS level of regret. In the moment people often say "no," to many of the things they wished they would have said "yes" to 30 years later.

"I know what it's like to be presented with an opportunity only to deeply regret that I passed on it later. I've done some pretty stupid things..."

People Don't Want to Regret Being Wrong

People don't want to be wrong.

They don't want to make a mistake. This is why people and companies who try and get a product perfect the first time it comes out go broke. The fear of imperfection can be incredibly destructive.

People would rather get a divorce and spend millions on the divorce than admit they said something wrong in a fight. You were right...good job...it just cost you a million bucks....

If someone takes an actual action, they have the potential to be wrong or make a mistake. If they do *nothing* they can't be accused of being wrong!

They might look stupid.

They might feel embarrassed.

They might take hits from family, friends, the public, their community.

but...

If they do nothing...then there is nothing to fear. If people do NOT act, then they can't do anything wrong, make mistakes or look bad. They will remain hidden in the crowd and that...is present time psychological safety.

Anything you want someone to do will come squarely up against the feelings of anticipating regret.

In almost every case, regret will emerge victorious and the person will "pass" or say, "maybe next time" or, "I'm not ready for that yet", or anything that doesn't require taking one step forward.

It takes an enormous amount of energy to overcome the anticipation of regret.

People Tend to Inaccurately Attribute Cause and Effect

Just because a specific choice is the right decision to make from a logical point of view, this in no way influences the person deciding. Quite the opposite. They will do what they **feel** is the right thing to do, in the face of factual knowledge that clearly shows otherwise.

Cause and Effect

A fun example. (Digress with me as we step into a casino.)

Do you play Blackjack? 21? This is a simple game where the player competes in cards against the dealer and whoever gets closest to 21 without going over wins the bet.

There is a specific way to play Blackjack that ensures over time, you will play a very "break-even game." The casino will let you bring a business-card sized "cheat sheet" with correct plays calculated by mathematical formula with you to the table because they know you won't follow what is on the card. They know you'll follow your gut and eventually throw the card out!

Like life, "21" is often a counter-intuitive game.

Most people won't make those hard choices because they involve taking an action. Casinos bank on this and then put expensive chandeliers up with the profits. The casino knows you will not give yourself a shot (immunization) to prevent a loss when you can do nothing, experience no pain in the moment, and "hope" things work out. People's predictable decisions to throw out the right thing to do in lieu of doing what

feels right is their ultimate downfall. Every time I play, I see people who know better make terrible plays...in blackjack...and in life.

What am I talking about?

You're playing "21" and your cards total 16. The dealer has a 10. If you don't draw a card, you will lose a little more than 3/4 of the time. If you do draw a card, you will lose a little less than 3/4 of the time. So unless you are "counting cards," there is nothing to think about. You simply take a card. You do the right thing and over time you will lose...less.

But then human nature comes along.

If you do the right thing, the smart thing, you will go over 21 about 2/3 of the time. In other words, taking a card will "cause" you to lose about 2/3 of the time. You have lost, you don't even get to see what would have happened had you remained inactive. It appears to your brain and everyone at the table that you shot yourself in the foot and probably "caused them to lose" as well!

Classical conditioning predicts you that you will REGRET taking a card in the future. So, you won't and don't. And it will cause you to lose a lot more money!

Because you lose 3/4 of the time when you have 16 and the dealer has 10 and most of those times are when you take another card, your emotional brain connects loss with taking a card. Your gut is taught, "stand on 16." And of course like all guts, it's wrong.

All the difficult decisions in a casino, like in life, revolve around taking an action. And like in real life, those decisions where action is taken generally generate pain. **Thus taking action = pain.**

Unfortunately their brain and body have "learned" through their own experience and the social pressure of the other players at the table that doing the right thing is a bad choice. "Let the dealer break." I love that...

Misattribution and Regret

And this is a vital key to understanding the human psyche and decision making:

People constantly misattribute cause and effect.

Humans "see" that something seemingly leads to failure when they do it, so they won't do it again. They think they are "learning"...and it is an illusion.

I was researching aspartame (think: artificial sweetener like Nutrasweet) again the other day. Yes, another friend told me that my Diet Coke habit would give me a brain tumor or some equally horrifying outcome. Being wrong doesn't bother me, especially when it comes to brain tumors...so... I'm wondering whether any research has come out showing that it might indeed be bad for you. I find a "credentialed" woman who said,

"Since the release of aspartame in the 1970's we have seen a huge rise in obesity, Parkinson's and..."

And of course people take that kind of a sentence to mean that one caused the other and because of misattribution of cause and effect, the average person will conclude as the nutritionist did, that the artificial sweetener causes all these problems. Of course, the following sentence is also true.

- "Since 'Nutritionist' became a respected profession in the 1970's, there has been a dramatic increase in obesity, Parkinson's, oh AND minorities and Mormons running for President...and...it's because of the high level of use of aspartame."
- "Since the the first successful moon launch in 1969, we have seen a huge rise in obesity and Parkinson's...."
- "Since the Beatles broke up, we have seen a huge rise in obesity and Parkinson's...."

You knew The Beatles influenced culture negatively, but I bet you didn't know they caused obesity and Parkinson's! Hah!

Tying two ideas together, because one follows the other, whether related or not in a logical fashion, makes it easy for the person who hasn't been taught to think accurately that, something causes something else.

By the way, the point is not that the woman was totally wrong. She could have been at least partially correct. I was unable to find research to back up her fear-inducing coma-like writing, but that doesn't mean she is wrong. She could be correct and certainly not many would argue that in most cases water (pure water) is a better choice than Diet Coke.

However, her faulty thinking, which is very persuasive indeed, doesn't cause her assertion to be true.

The point of course, is that humans link one thing with another and immediately create a cause and effect scenario in the brain.

These very same cause and effect linkages cause people to make a lot of decisions for inaction that would have otherwise increased their chances of success, happiness, finding love, etc.

Someone asks another person out on a date.
They are rejected.

They do it again with the same result.

And, they stop asking, assuming that the other 4 billion people of the same sex will have the same response.

I don't want to be rejected.

You don't want to be rejected.

We don't want to feel the regret of looking bad and feeling rejected.

Therefore, we stop asking.

People are rapidly conditioned to think "from the gut" and make poor decisions most of the time, which is why they don't act on ANYTHING in life.

So what...how?

Back to our "21" game in the Casino for a moment.

...There are dozens of correct actions that players playing "21" should do. But between **the social atmosphere of other players and their own fear from "experiential learning," they can't pull the trigger because of the regret that awaits them.** If they "hit" (take a card), they feel they will break and lose. Other players will lose who didn't take the next unseen card. It's not just your money, it's everyone's money that rides on your decision, and they *all* decided *not* to take a card.

So what happens at the "21" game is this:

The player who knows how to play profitably draws to the 16 and goes over 21. No regrets. Just part of the way it works. It's a decision between two bad choices. The right choice is the one that gives you the best chance to win, not what happens after you make your decision.

Perhaps you're coaching the player who doesn't know how to play profitably and she draws to the 16 and goes over 21.
TONS of regret. "I shouldn't have done that, you idiot!"

You assure the player who is upset, "You did the right thing."
The dealer takes the money away...and your words fall on deaf ears.

Two people. Same outcome. (They lost.) Two very different sets of feelings.

And those feelings and learned instincts will cause the player to go broke in the casino *and* then back in real life as well. He will allow the anticipated regret of failure in all of its manifestations to stop him from doing the right thing.

If you play with your gut, you won't regret it in the short run but you will in the long run. In fact, "evidence" will teach you that if you follow your gut, you will seemingly make "good decisions" and stay out of trouble. You "feel" like you are doing the right thing because you are regretting fewer and fewer of your "choices" (inaction) but what is really happening is your stack of chips is dwindling...in blackjack and in life.

Your job as an influencer is to cause other people to sidestep their learned experience.

Inaction FEELS right because it brings no immediate regret.

Key Point: You must get people to look back on this moment, right now and cause them to see that inaction is what they will regret. *Only looking back does the person then realize the mistakes they were making by doing nothing!*

Inaction typically leads to ultimate loss and failure even when it "feels right" to not take action.

And it goes deeper and the distinctions become more powerful.

The Influential Approach for Can-Do Versus No-Do People

Some people approach life with a "do attitude" or an "action attitude trait." Sometimes they win. Sometimes they lose. But this is who they are. They tend to take actions when presented with an opportunity.

Others approach life with a "no do attitude" or an "inaction attitude trait." They almost always feel like they made the right decision. And generally there is apparent evidence to prove it. These people tend to not take actions when presented with an opportunity.

These two people will experience regret or anticipated regret at very different times. If you know when, you can change your entire approach in influencing them!

The Most Powerful Regret

Regret is **most powerful** when people do the opposite of who they see themselves as (action or inaction) seemingly causing them lose, make a mistake, fail, or otherwise screw up.

That's where regret is the greatest.

What Causes this Mess?

Consistency and classical conditioning cause this mess and it reinforces the "inactive" person to further inaction in the future.

Regret is felt most deeply when someone loses/makes a mistake AND when they did the opposite of what their personality normally would have done. Pairing the two together is what quite often causes deep regret.

If they follow their general personality direction, they would not have felt any significant regret and they know it... and in the future they are much less likely to move in opposition to "who they are" as a person.

By the way, can you imagine these two very different people being married to each other?

One person is an "action" person and the other an "inaction" person. The inaction person will be upset with the action person in the majority of the decisions made, because in a majority of situations, the action will cost. The action person will be wrong (as viewed in the short-term) and make more mistakes in the short-term. In general, when people take an action they either lose or win fairly big. (So big that it erases all the small losses of the failures from taking actions.)

In general when people "take an inaction," ...they do nothing.... nothing significant seems to happen. As you have seen, this apparent fact is quite incorrect.

And so when you are attempting to influence someone, you now know that it is the personality "direction" or "attitude" that will most often influence the individual's ultimate decision. If you ask someone to move in a direction opposite of their standard direction, they will feel anticipated regret immediately and great regret when failure happens, regardless of whether the decision made sense.

Well, I'd regret overloading you with more distinctions today with any more distinctions, so I guess we'll bridge to *Influence: Boot Camp!*

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