

practice management



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# A tale of two frogs

**Ashley Latter** on the differences between negative and positive influences.

**T**wo frogs were hopping through a farmyard one day, when they both jumped into a bucket of milk. As they were both very thirsty, they drank the bucket dry and sat at the bottom feeling very full. After a short while, around a dozen frogs came over to the top of the bucket and started screaming that the farmer was coming and he was going to get them. The screaming got louder and both the frogs started to hop as high as they could, trying to get out of the bucket.

The frogs, who were watching at the side, started to scream louder, except this time they started screaming negative comments. Eventually one of the frogs, believing what his friends had been saying, just gave up and sat at the bottom of the bucket awaiting his fate. The other frog was more determined, and as the screaming got louder,

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he launched one final effort and he managed to hop out of the bucket to safety. As you read this, you probably want to know how the second frog managed to hop out of the bucket. He was deaf and could not hear what the other frogs were saying.

You see the first frog kept hearing his fellow frogs saying that he could not do it, he agreed with them and gave up. Because he was deaf, the second frog thought that his fellow frogs were being positive; that encouraged him even more and he managed to get away and survive.

## Attitude

So what message can we take from this story. Well, several lessons come to mind. Like everyone else in the UK I have been intrigued with what has been going on in the world economy and recently I started watching ☺



**Ashley Latter**

runs an ethical sales and communication programme for healthcare specialists.



● Listen to the positive messages and ignore the bad news.

the news. By the end of it, I was so depressed and I must have had the worst night's sleep I have had in ages. The next day I was working from home and as I switched on my computer to check my emails, I was exhausted and again feeling down. In my inbox, I received three testimonial letters from delighted clients who had taken my course the previous week. One dentist told me that the next day he had secured a £10,000 treatment plan, another said he had managed to secure over £15,000 worth of treatment in seven days, and another thanked me for the great two day programme I had delivered in Salisbury the week before. In addition, I had confirmation from an existing client, booking a team of seven on one of my courses.

How did I feel? I can assure you it was show time all day in my office. Since then all I have listened to is music in my office and personal development CDs in my car. I have decided to become deaf to all the bad news and ensure that what I listen to

and read is only positive.

I remember in the early 90s, when I started my career in Dale Carnegie Training, we had a sales meeting. It was the time of the last major recession in the UK and things were not great. I remember my sales director standing up and saying he had decided 'we were not going to participate in the recession' and that

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he was going to tell his clients that our programmes were recession busters. It completely changed my whole attitude and my self-confidence zoomed. We had bumper times in terms of growth in those early years.

Recently, I had the pleasure of working with nine forward thinking dentists and orthodontists, who I consider to be entrepreneurs. This group of people have done several courses with me before and were some of the most forward thinking people I know. They were all sharing how busy they were, that their practices were doing really well and how they were expanding into new markets and in some cases, new

buildings. It was a pleasure to be part of such a great group of people.

### Recession

It is going to get tougher and the market place is going to change. Many people have had it too easy for many years and the next few months will sort out the men from the boys, so why don't you decide not to take part in this recession? There are, and still will be, many opportunities out there. You are just going to have to work a bit harder to achieve them. Developing world-class communication skills/customer care is going to be the most important skill your team and practice are going to have to develop. Enhancing technical skills is crucial but if you cannot portray the benefits to your clients they will not buy.

Increasing marketing, becoming pro-active and ensuring that your team is providing world-class customer service to your patients is going to be essential. Every time the telephone rings it could be an opportunity. Ensure that your team answers that telephone superbly well and, if it is a good opportunity, it is followed through to an appointment.

I ran three two-day *Ethical sales and communication programmes* to around 71 delegates recently. They all decided not to take part in this recession, so why don't you decide that as well? Take some action now and do not bury your head in the sand. Which frog are you? Are you hopping harder and harder, or have you decided to wait at the bottom of the bucket. ■

Ashley Latter is a business coach and has delivered the *Ethical sales and communication programme* to over 4000 dentists, nurses, hygienists, and practice managers. He is the author of *Helping Patients to say YES*. To find out more about his courses and to register for his free email newsletter, visit [www.thesellingcoach.com](http://www.thesellingcoach.com) or email [ashley@thesellingcoach.com](mailto:ashley@thesellingcoach.com)