

The Most Critical Skill Every Network Marketing Professional must Possess

Before you can build a network marketing empire, you're going to have to learn to become a master of your emotions. In other words, you have to be mentally tough!

by **Steve Siebold**

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Many people would say that recruiting is the most important skill in network marketing. Others would say contacting and inviting. Even more would argue it's learning to be effective on the phone. I disagree with all of these answers. All are important, but not *most* important. Before any of these skills contribute to building your network marketing empire, you're going to have to be *mentally tough*. In other words, you're going to have to learn to become a master of your emotions. This means learning how to control your thoughts, feelings, and attitudes. Especially under pressure.

Why is *this* the single most critical skill?

Because without it you will fail. Period. The rejection you face on a daily basis in this business will wipe you out, just as it has wiped out millions of other sharp, ambitious, well-educated people. The masses don't understand network marketing, and their ignorance often takes the form of ridicule. If you are mentally tough enough to keep bouncing back while growing stronger with each attack, you have a legitimate shot at living your dream in this business. No guarantees, but you have a shot.

The majority of people are addicted to the approval of others.

Most of us are taught from an early age to place a high value on what other people think of us. We're told to obey the rules, respect our elders,

and comply with society's value structure. When we stray from these commands, we are punished. Network marketing demands that you abandon this philosophy and dive into the mix. In other words, make a decision to place your highest value on your approval of yourself. This is a decision to lead rather than follow. The Gallup Organization tells us there are approximately 10 million leaders in the world leading approximately 6 billion people. Your ability to break any addiction you might have to acquiring the approval of others will determine which group you fall into.

The masses are not engaged in critical thinking

The average prospect you're contacting is more concerned about what Television program they're going to watch tonight than they are about securing their future. By middle age most people have given up hope of converting their dreams into reality and subsequently seek solace in activities where effort is minimal and pleasure is king. According to the USA Today Newspaper, the average American watches 1,669 hours of television per year. My point is that the average person's criticism of your opportunity shouldn't carry much weight if you're a true leader. I'm not putting anyone down, I'm simply suggesting the next time you experience a harsh rejection to consider the source. On the other end of the spectrum, most successful people are slow to ridicule something they don't understand. These people are accustomed to using their critical thinking skills on a daily basis and tend to carefully consider and weigh all options before reaching a conclusion.

How mentally tough are you?

Mental Toughness means controlling your emotions in performance situations, and people who are mentally tough develop thick skin when it comes to rejection. Mental Toughness in Network Marketing is developed by getting in front of a pre-determined number of prospects every day, either on the phone or face to face. The people who join you won't make you mentally tough. The people who decline but are positive about the business won't make you tough, either. It's the people that laugh at you and the whole concept of Network Marketing that will temper the steel inside your psyche. They will facilitate your emotional growth or they will blow you out of the business. It depends on how tough you are when the rejection hits.

The secret to survival is ‘Mental Preparation’

Many of the Network Marketing leaders I've encountered over the last 20 years spend a substantial amount of time trying to persuade their prospects and distributors how easy it is to build a successful Network Marketing business, while behind the scenes working 12-15 hour days. The average leader in this profession spends a lot of time trying to control attrition and sponsor new people. The yearly attrition rate in Network Marketing is well over 90%, and the reason is lack of mental preparation. Instead of telling people how easy it is to build a million dollar business, do the direct opposite. Tell them it's going to be difficult. Prepare them for the onslaught of rejection headed their way. Give them examples. Role-play with them. Let them experience the emotional assault that awaits them in the field. This doesn't guarantee their success, but it gives them a fighting chance to survive their first year in the business.

Take a tip from trial lawyers

Go for the throat during role-play.

If you've ever observed a trial lawyer preparing his client to be cross-examined, you have the blueprint to effective role-play for mental toughness. The lawyer's job is to simulate the attack his client is about to encounter, especially during emotionally charged questions and accusations. His goal is to get under the clients skin and tap the anger, frustration and guilt he's feeling, before his opponent has a chance to do the same thing in court in front of the jury. At first, the witness is shocked by the attack. But after a while he becomes desensitized to the emotionally charged language and begins to emotionally separate himself.

Spaced repetition is the secret

The emotional toughening process works best in through spaced repetition. I would recommend at least 4 training sessions in the first 30

days after the new distributor signs up. The key is to keep him or her out of the field before this training is completed. The old strategy of throwing a new person out in the field before arming him or her with the mental tools necessary to survive is unfair at best; malpractice at worst. Your job as a leader is to help prepare your charge for what lies ahead on the battlefield. Be responsible and do it right. Competent coaching means investing the necessary time to do the job properly.

Start with the premise of the problem

An excited, new, Network Marketer can't understand why the entire world doesn't get it. They often go out in the field for the first time with the expectation that everyone is going to see the opportunity like they do. When people don't respond, they are incredulous. It just doesn't make sense to them. They were so sure everyone would see it the way they do. Your job as a leader/coach is to help them accept the fact that most people ridicule Network Marketing because they don't understand it. The average person is highly intelligent but mentally unengaged, and to fully comprehend the magnitude of opportunity that Network Marketing presents, you have to study it. Most people would rather go to happy hour or watch the ball game than seriously consider your company's compensation plan. This is not an insult. It's a statistical fact. If the average person really understood Network Marketing, chances are they would get involved. It's ingenious, and anyone who understands the principles of marketing and distribution will see that. Once your new person understands that the laughter and ridicule they experience says more about the prospect than it does about the profession, they have a mental foundation to work from.

Next, prepare them for the 5 major objections

Survey the most active distributors in your company and ask them to list the 5 most common objections they encounter in the field. Next, ask them to give you their best response to these objections. Once you have this information, role-play with your new people until they can recite the proper responses by heart. They aren't fully prepared until they can

repeat the responses quickly and naturally. This takes time and patience, and it's a critical part of their mental training. Once they get good, get tougher in the role-play. Change the words of the objections around and try to throw them off. Then reverse roles and let them play the prospect. This gives them a chance to see their mentor in action. You had better be prepared, and you better be good. I can promise you that any successful trial lawyer could take the witness stand and endure the emotional assault of the best prosecutor in the world. If you're a true leader you'll be able to do the same. Put in the same practice time you're asking your new distributor to invest. If you don't, you can be sure you will get caught. Once you do, your credibility is gone.

Finally, explain the brains primary purpose

To cap off this introductory phase of mental toughness training, explain to people how their brain works. The brains primary purpose is to preserve and protect the mind and body. When an event occurs, the brain asks three questions:

1. *What is it?* 2. *What does it mean?* 3. *What do I do?*

Let's say the event is a prospect rejecting the new distributor. The average person has been conditioned to interpret rejection as a negative, and even psychologically threatening, event. As a result, they respond defensively and sometimes aggressively. The rejection itself is not the problem. The real menace is in the meaning that the distributor has assigned to it. The good news is that the meaning of an event is only a perception, and perceptions can be altered through reprogramming. The significance is that if you change what rejection means, you automatically change the response to it. Train your people to interpret every rejection as being one step closer to sponsoring the next person. Train them to understand that rejection is what accounts for the big money that is paid out to top distributors in this profession. Have you ever heard of a retail salesperson making a million dollars a year? No, because the rejection factor is low and the customer comes to them, so more people can do it successfully. It's simply not worth that much in the marketplace because so many people can do it. It's all supply and demand. Once they understand that rejection creates the barrier of entry for 99% of Network Marketers to become successful, they will get excited to know they are

among the top 1%. Let them know they are part of an elite group of people in the profession who understand how the business really works. You will have to program them to believe this by emphasizing it over and over until they're mentally tough enough to stand on their own.

Get help with the programming process

As leader and coach to your organization, it's your responsibility to shape and mold your people into competent Network Marketing professionals. That being said, you can't do it all. You can get them started and encourage them along the way, but you're going to need help. Train your people to invest in books, CDs, and seminars on topics like mental toughness, motivation, and vision building. Anything that keeps world-class ideas in front of them when you're not there. Remember they are surrounded, as we all are, by middle-class thinkers. Consciousness is contagious, so be sure they are exposed to the best of the best. 90 days of this type of programming and exposure should be enough to enable them to stand on their own. If they are still dependent on you after that, move on and invest your precious time in someone else. Everyone has the ability to access their mental toughness, but many choose (consciously or unconsciously) not to tap into it. In a profession where momentum is critical to your success, you don't have time to wait for the slow movers.

Make a commitment today

Decide that you will become a mental toughness expert to ensure your success. Begin with these simple steps and you'll be well on your way. 😊



Steve Siebold

Steve Siebold, CSP 40, is a former professional tennis player and national coach. He's the author of *177 Mental Toughness Secrets of the World Class* (London House Press, 2005). Siebold's Mental Toughness clientele includes world-class athletes, Fortune 500 Companies, and entrepreneurs. For more information, visit www.mentaltoughnesssecrets.com or call 561.733.9078

Siebold and partners have built two companies from the ground up into national concerns. Mr. Siebold is considered one of the fastest rising professional speakers and consultants in the United States and Europe, in the field of Mental Toughness Training for salespeople.

Siebold's articles appear regularly in various publications throughout the U.S. His column appears monthly in *Networking Times*, an international industry trade magazine. Steve Siebold and Bill Gove met in 1996, and became best friends and business partners and formed the Gove-Siebold Group. From 1996 to 2001, they shared stages around the world and spoke to over 30,000 people.

Today, the company remains focused on helping people develop world-class performance skills to convert their dreams into reality.