



THE NEW ELLIS GROUP

Monday Monday

Connecting the Dots with Karen Kaplowitz



*Helping you create and reinforce the habits of successful career building,
gleaned from my work as a business development strategist, trainer and coach*

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Expecting and Confronting Rejection. Dealing with rejection is part of the life of a rainmaker. Success in attracting and retaining clients requires a lot of persistence, often in the face of apparent rejection. It usually takes time to establish relationships to the point where you will be considered for new work, and you need to remain top of mind so that when a prospect or client has new work they will think of you. Those two factors mean that persistence over a period of time is a necessity even when some of your attempts at contact are met with silence. If you treated every unanswered phone call or email as a personal rejection, it would be hard to persist in most marketing strategies. To improve your ability to cope with rejection, the most critical factor is setting reasonable expectations for yourself.

- Don't expect much response if you are sending out impersonal communications, like mass emails. You may still want to use them but understand their limits.
- If your communications are centered on your activities or services, the likelihood of a response is diminished. Always suggest some relevance of the information or communication to your clients and prospects. "I thought this program or article would be interesting to you because..."
- If there is no time specified for a response, you can expect your message to be set aside in favor of more pressing matters.
- Have some perspective on the likelihood you will get a response. How well do you know the person and will they be expecting to hear from you?
- Indicate what your next step will be. You might say that if you don't hear from someone, you will communicate with their assistant about setting a time to talk.

But if you don't get a response after repeated efforts, consider whether you need to ask prospects the penultimate question of whether they want you to stop trying.

Example: A law school classmate recently became general counsel of a company in an industry with which you are familiar. You send her a note of congratulations and you have the good sense to refrain from swooping in immediately to propose that she consider your firm for work. You are on the program committee for your law school alumni group and create an opportunity to invite your classmate to participate in a program for the club. At the meeting, your classmate tells you that she appreciates the opportunity to speak and says that she would like to have lunch "sometime".

You make several futile efforts afterwards to set a date for lunch. You get no response to either emails or phone calls. You persist with your contacts. But after many non-responses, you finally send the following note: "At our alumni program, you suggested we have lunch which I would be delighted to do. I have tried to reach you a few times and haven't heard back. I assume that is either because you are very busy or because you are inundated with invitations to have lunch and would rather not do so. Please let me know which it is." You immediately get a response from her assistant telling you that your classmate is really sorry she has not responded and sets a date for lunch.

Are you anticipating the likelihood of rejection in your marketing communications and planning accordingly? When rejection persists indefinitely, are you willing to ask the ultimate question of whether your prospects want you to cease and desist?