

*Getting and Keeping
a Successful Telesales Attitude*

**An Interview With Dr. Alan Zimmerman,
by Art Sobczak**

**TelesalesSuccess.com Inner Circle
Platinum Audio Seminar**

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“Getting and Keeping a Successful Telesales Attitude” An Interview with Dr. Alan Zimmerman,
by Art Sobczak.

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Published By:

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Art: Hi again and welcome to the Telesales Success Platinum Audio Seminar. I'm Art Sobczak. You are in for some potentially life changing information in this session. Today I'm interviewing Doctor Alan Zimmerman. He knows what he's talking about regarding selling and attitude. At the age of seven he was selling greeting cards door-to-door. By age 14 he owned a small international import business. By 21 he was teaching at the University of Minnesota and during the next 15 years he was selected as the outstanding faculty member by two different universities. At age 36 Alan retired from teaching and opened his own speaking and training company. That position has allowed him to deliver more than 2,000 programs to more than a million people in 48 states and 22 countries.

Of course you may already be familiar with Doctor Zimmerman. You may have seen him on CNN or perhaps the CBS Morning Show. In fact his newest book called Pivot: How One Turn in Attitude Can Lead to Success has been featured on over 200 TV and radio shows across the country. Alan also is a member of the National Speaker's Association Speaker Hall of Fame and that's an honor that has only been given to a few people in the last 30 years including, oh maybe you've heard of Ronald Reagan, Colin Powell, Norman Vincent Peal and Zig Ziglar.

On a personal note Alan and I are members of Master Speakers International, a mastermind group where we've been sharing success ideas for the past eight years or so, and I can tell you he has some fabulous material that can change your life.

Today Alan and I will be discussing material from his book Pivot about a topic that is extremely important for any sales person, and that's your attitude. Alan welcome.

Alan: Well thanks Art. It's a pleasure being here. I've learned so much from you about sales and it's a pleasure getting a chance to chat here.

Art: All right. Well I'm going to jump right into this Alan. I've long taught myself that the most important key to success in sales is your attitude. Anyone can memorize techniques and processes but not everyone has an attitude for success. So tell us about the importance of attitude as it relates to achievement.

Alan: Absolutely. From all the research I've done at the university, teaching over the years, speaking across the country, it really is the number one predictor of success. It predicts more success than IQ, education level, gender, or racial background. There's nothing that comes up higher on this scale of what predicts success than the right attitude. As Ziglar said years ago, your attitude more than your aptitude determines your altitude, and that's really right.

But some people dismiss this kind of an inspirational, motivational statement, "Nice to say, but where's the evidence?" Well, we've got the evidence now. The

leading researcher on attitude probably is Doctor Martin Seligman, who wrote a great book called Learned Optimism. And what he found in various studies - I'll just quote one of them – he found in one long term study of 1500 people, 83 percent of the people that he called group 'A' chose a particular a particular job because they believed they could make lots of money. 17 percent of the people he called group 'B', chose their jobs because they had positive attitudes towards those jobs.

Well he followed those people for 20 years. What he found out in those two groups, is they produced a 101 millionaires, 101 millionaires out of those 1500 people. But the amazing thing was only one of those millionaires came from group 'A'. People who chose the job because they thought they'd make a lot of money. A hundred of 101 came from group 'B' those who had a positive attitude. And perhaps even more amazing, more than 70 percent of these millionaires never went to college. And more than 70 percent of those who became CEOs graduated in the bottom half of their class. So Seligman concluded that it was attitude that was the key determining factor in success. Now I see that evidence every place.

Art: Those are amazing statistics and I also see the same thing regarding attitude in the workplace among sales people. Particularly among something that you had mentioned, and that was people that just poo-pood the whole thought of attitude and motivation. And it seems that the people who have these negative attitudes behave in ways that give them little chance to be positive. So tell us about the things that people do and think that causes them to be negative.

Alan: Well that's a good question. People will sometimes say, “Well how do you know if you have a negative attitude?” When I was on the CBS Morning Show a while ago Harry Smith asked that question. He said, “Alan how do you know if your attitude is good or bad?” And I said, “It's very simple Harry. All you have to do is look at your first reaction to any bit of news you get. If, for example, you go to your office. You find a note from the boss that says, “See me immediately.” What is your first reaction? Is your first reaction, “Well great, the raise is coming early this year!” Or is your first reaction, “What I'd do wrong this time?”

Art: Right.

Alan: And 85 percent expect negative news. And so I would challenge your listeners to think about what their first reaction is to any bit of news. If it's on the negative side, they've got some work to do. And what I see are five different ways that a negative attitude will sneak out or show up in your behavior that people might not be aware of. One of those is simply making excuses. I see it in sales all the time. It's a bad economy. It's a poor territory. There's too much competition. Those kinds of things, and yet somebody else can be in that same area and do very well in a profession, sales, whatever it might be.

And so typically what I would say is that excuses are so easy to make up, and if your making excuses it's a pretty good sign your attitude needs some work. I will tell people that losers use their circumstances as an excuse to give up. But winners use their circumstances as a reason to get going. That's the first thing. Take a look if you're making excuses or not.

Art: So really were talking about personal responsibility.

Alan: Absolutely. It's an old slogan perhaps, but “if it is to be it's up to me.”

Art: And by the way old slogans are old slogans for a reason.

Alan: Yeah, there's some wisdom behind them.

Art: That's right.

Alan: The second way that a negative attitude comes out is having too much fear. John Gardner, a great author - actually in the cabinet of one of our previous presidents - made the comment that one of the reasons mature people stop learning is that they become less and less willing to risk failure. They're afraid of trying something and failing. If I make a cold call it may not work. If I try a closing technique, I may not close. And fear can be okay to guide us towards a particular path, but if it's stopping us from trying something, it's obviously not helpful.

Napoleon Hill who wrote Think and Grow Rich, one of the classic books on attitude 50 years ago, talked about that and he asked this question, “How many times does a person actually try, on average, before they give up on a new goal?” And the answer was less than one. Lots of people quit before they even try. It's just too much fear. I'm sure you see it in sales all the time, fear stopping people from trying what they know they should be doing.

Art: We call it call reluctance or call avoidance and of course we look at what might hurt, and just don't perform that activity. So yeah, most definitely.

Alan: The third way a negative attitude comes out is what I call pain avoidance. It's just too painful to change my present behavior. It's the alcoholic that doesn't stop drinking because it's hard. It's painful to quit the drinking. It's the person who's afraid of trying something such as changing their physical regime, their workout program because it's too much work, too painful to get in shape.

One person I quote in the book, David Ulrich, wrote a book called Human Resource Champions and he asked, “What percentage of people actually stop smoking and never start again?” And the answer was 17 percent. He asked what percentage of people on Weight Watchers reached their target weight – five percent. And what percentage actually maintain their target weight? – one half of

one percent. What do you say is that sometimes some people just see it as too hard, too painful. And if you're acting that way you're talking that way. Pretty good sign your attitude needs adjustment.

The fourth thing is simply having some bad habits. Maybe you get up too late in the morning. You clean your desk before you start making those calls. Those people who are not succeeding in business, not succeeding in sales, I see them apply all kinds of bad habits, which may be valuable to some extent, including cleaning the desk. But they let a habit like that get in the way of doing something more important. Denis Waitley wrote a book called The Joy of Working and he talks about how habits take control of our behavior, and get in the way of our success. He says, “Habits start as harmless thoughts. They're like flimsy cobwebs with little substance. Then with practice they grow, thought upon thought, used with self-talk and attitude so they become like steel cables.”

Now what he's saying in essence is the littlest habit may not be a big deal at the beginning, but the more you practice it the more it takes control of you. It gets in the way of your success. So I ask people, “Do you have any habits that are really getting in the way of your productivity, profitability, things you know you should be doing?”

And the fifth thing that is an indication of having a poor attitude, is not having any clear goals. Sometimes I've worked with athletes, with coaches, even a little bit in the Olympics. We have a real simple slogan there – If you have no goals, you get no gold. And it's quite clear that when people simply write down their goals - it may be as simple as writing down some New Years resolution – going to improve my performance in a certain area, going to lose a certain number of pounds. Simply write that down. Stick it in a desk drawer somewhere, and almost forget about it. Find that piece of paper two, three years later, and you'll be amazed. You'll say to yourself, “Oh my gosh, I did this, this and this.”

What the act of writing does is it tells your subconscious mind that of all those thousands of possibilities these are the few I'd like. It gives us direction. So if people are not writing down their goals there's a good chance they've got a negative attitude that's getting in the way of thinking they can achieve those goals, so why even bother?

Art: I'd like to think that people listening to this, or sales people in general, have good attitudes because that's why they're in sales. But I know that's not necessarily true because, of course, we're human and sometime we do let that negativity slip into our everyday thinking and behavior, the behaviors that you just talked about. So what are some suggestions we can use to deal with it?

Alan: That's important. I'll give you several things that people can do to take a look at their attitude and see if they need to get rid of some of those negative attitudes. Number one thing I say in the book is identify your recurrent negative

thoughts. In other words, start paying attention to what you're saying to yourself. What's your thinking? And actually write them down. Maybe you say to yourself, "I'm no good at making cold calls. I'm no good at prospecting. I'm not good at maintaining my weight. I'm no good at this or that." Start being aware of that. I call these mind binders. You say to yourself over again, "I can't do this, can't do that." You're right. You simply cannot say a negative thing to yourself over and over again and expect a positive result. So first of all, identify any recurrent negative thoughts.

And the second thing I tell people, is critique those negative thoughts. People say, "Well my negative thoughts are no big deal. Everybody gets down about not meeting a sales goal or not achieving certain things. Not a big deal." So simply write down the negative thoughts that you have most often down on a piece of paper lined down the middle. On the left side, put the word benefits. On the right hand side, the word 'cost'. And ask yourself, "What are all the things you get as benefits? What do you achieve? What do you get good from that negative thought?"

On the other side, write down all the things that you pay, the cost that you have to pay for having that negative thought. You'll almost always find out there's almost nothing helpful in that negative thought whatsoever. And rationally, maybe at the end it will push you away from thinking that way because you know it just doesn't help.

The third thing is stop your negative thoughts. This one is so easy, and it works so well. When you catch yourself saying a negative thought to yourself - in your mind or even out loud - just say, "Stop it. Now just stop it. Cut it out." Literally what you're doing is taking control of the mind, because either the mind controls you or you control it. If you can tell yourself often enough, "Stop it or cut it out." It will stop those negative thoughts.

Some people will even make a jester if they're by themselves - perhaps in a car - when getting down on themselves. Put up a hand jester like a policeman saying, "Stop it." And by saying it and acting it out, they can stop those thoughts from taking control of their actions.

The fourth thing is refuse to verbalize the negative. In other words, I've noticed in corporations where I speak - I've asked employees about this and they say it's so common - you can go into the employee lunch room and there is this heavy atmosphere of griping and complaining about all kinds of things. Now we found in the research that you can have four or five people talking about something negatively and a positive person might join that table for lunch. Within a few seconds they're adding their own complaints as to what's going wrong or what isn't working well. You simply can't be around that kind of thing and add to it. Refuse to verbalize the negative. Don't tell yourself, "There's no way I can do

this. That’ll never work out. I’m no good at...” without just thinking those things but not verbalizing those things.

One thing Art I know you teach also, number five is visualize the positive. As crazy as this sounds, they make fun of this on Saturday Night Live - affirmations and visualizations. They put it down and they make jokes about it, but they’re dead wrong. You won’t find one single winning athlete or highly affective professional that doesn’t swear by this technique of visualizing the positive results.

In psychology we talk about be, believe, achieve. If there’s no way you can picture something, if you can never see yourself succeeding at something, chances are you won’t do it. You must be able to visualize or conceive the results you want. Maybe it’s closing those sales. Maybe it’s achieving that weight goal, funding your IRA pension fund. You must be able to visualize exactly what it is you want to achieve.

Art: To interject here, one thing that I talk about in seminars - as you know I’m a golfer - and I was reading in *Golf Digest* about one of the famous golf teachers, Dave Pelts, who talks about the short game, who said you should hit your second shot first. If you notice out on the golf course if somebody had a bad shot maybe they’ll go up and practice another one, and more often than not, the second one is perfect. And it goes along the lines of what you mentioned here, because they can now see themselves actually have a good shot and they’re mad because they didn’t have a good shot the first time.

And then also something else, there seems to be less pressure when they do it the second time. And a lot of this has to do with the visualization factor.

Alan: Great advice. In fact, one book that your readers or listeners might find helpful is Tim Galway’s book [The Inner Game of Tennis](#) or [The Inner Game of Golf](#).

Art: It is. I have the golf book. Very good.

Alan: A sixth thing Art in terms of killing off negative attitudes, I call it avoid slippery places. Going back to the example of the lunch room, of fellow employees, fellow sales people complaining about something. If you find that to be a place where you get sucked into the negativity and adding to it, you need to stay away from that. It may be telling some fellow sales people, “I’m sorry. I just need to be at my best today. I can’t listen to that, it brings me down, excuse me.” Find a different place to eat your lunch, than being at places that tend to bring you down.

Number seven I say do the opposite. In other words in one example I talk about if you find yourself making critical comments about your customers, how they’re

all jerks, they never understand, they expect too much – if you find yourself thinking or saying that kind of thing, do the opposite. Find things to praise customers about. Say something good about them. What you’re doing is neutralizing the affect of the negativity. Do the opposite.

And the last thing, number eight, is relax and reenergize. Sales is a tough job. You’re out there putting yourself on the line – your products or services, your personal feelings – and sometimes it doesn’t work. You do get rejected obviously.

The good news is you cannot maintain a negative feeling in a relaxed state. Maybe taking time to take that walk, close your eyes, do some deep breathing, whatever works for you. That cleans out the system. When you’re totally relaxed, you can’t stay negative. It begins to dissipate.

Art: Great point and I suggest the same thing. For example, if somebody is doing a batch of prospecting calls, 10, 20 or more, or for somebody who’s inside all day long, if you just sit there you might have the tendency to look at this as a manufacturing type job. So I do recommend to get up, walk around, get some fresh air, change your environment a little bit, clear your thinking, then come back in, because people have to realize we’re talking to people every time that we pick up the phone. We’re not just putting in the activity, or making that next contact, or just putting in phone time.

All right, one other thing that I saw in your book that really hit home and that is the whole topic of risks. Sales, in general, is a profession that allows us to take risks and enjoy the rewards. So tell us about risks and it’s relevance regarding your attitude.

Alan: It’s a key topic. Doctor Bruce Larsen was asked by The Lilly Foundation to do a research project a few years ago and they said, “We’ll pay you a full time salary to go to workshops. It might be on sales, on motivation, on success, goal setting. But go to all the workshops for two years. Listen to the experts. And afterwards ask them what’s the key thing, what’s the one thing they all agree you must have to be affective in a competitive challenging world.” He got one consistent answer. They all said that to be affective in a changing, difficult world, you must have a life filled with risk. And he was kind of taken back, “What do you mean risk is one of the keys?” He found there was a connection between those people who had an overdose of fear in their life and poor mental health.

And some people live their whole lives by fear. In other words, “I couldn’t give that talk. I couldn’t do that kind of job. I’ve always done it this way. I couldn’t do that.” When you have too much fear in your life, there’s not much room for self-esteem or motivation.

I was teaching years ago at the university, and I would sometimes have teachers come for the summer to get a Master’s degree or a Doctor’s degree, things like

that, and typically great classes. I enjoyed them a great deal, the teachers. I remember one teacher who said to me, "I've been teaching longer than you've been alive." And it took me back to a situation where I was attending a class. One time a professor looked at all of us as teachers and he said, "Before we start this class let me ask you this question, have you really been teaching for 30 years? Or have you taught one year 30 times?" And it made me think that if we were not changing, if we were not growing and upgrading our professional skills, not taking risks at changing in some way, we can't expect people out there to be respecting us and following along with us.

We all have a comfort zone. I've got one, you've got one, everybody on this call or listening to the CD has a comfort zone. We all know that terminology. But quite simply, if you want more of anything in life - you want a better bottom line, a higher closing ratio, better relationship with your spouse - whatever you want more of always requires a risk. You can't do the same thing, the same old way and expect better results. It doesn't work that way.

People say to me, "Well what if I take a risk, I try a new approach to managing my team or try a new personal goal setting and it doesn't work? I try a new product and the customers don't like it?" Well obviously you feel disappointed temporarily. Even then get the feeling that at least you have the courage to try and you can respect yourself for that. And the one thing I tell people, is there's no way you can really totally lose in risk taking. Realize you can do it, but at least you live by courage - not controlled by fear.

The other thing I would suggest is the customers, the prospects see us - and as I said before - changing and growing. If they don't, it's very hard for them to respect us and want to follow our leadership. Think maybe of a person you've worked with who always has an excuse: "Well this wouldn't work. We've always done it this way. That'll never be necessary." This also is an excuse for not risking. Think of how you feel towards them. You probably don't have a great deal of respect, don't want to follow their particular direction and respect those folks who will take an instructive risk, try to improve, try to upgrade. Try to follow those folks who will step outside their comfort zone.

So quite simply, I don't see anyway you can live in a comfort zone, do the same things the same old way, be afraid of change and have great self-respect or respect of anybody else. It's really an issue that affects the relationship that you have with other people out there.

Art: You certainly cannot be truly, truly successful in sales unless you are willing and able to take risks. And one thing I tell sales reps is if you fear something, if you fear maybe calling the top level executive, or asking for the biggest sale, just step back and ask yourself, "What is absolutely the worst thing that could happen here?" And when you do give that some thought it really is kind of silly, because about the worst thing that could happen is you'll get a no. But if you look at the

possible positive, even if you do get a no, going back to the listing the positives and the negatives, your going to be much better off and more motivated next time.

And I can't remember where I had heard this quote but I use it quite often and it's this, "Are you going to regret more in life the risks that you take or the ones that you didn't take?"

Alan: Well it's like turning to a co-worker, if I asked Bill to help me with some project and Bill says, "No." Well what's the big deal? I had no help before, I still don't. So I have everything to gain and nothing to lose by asking.

Art: Most certainly. We could probably do an entire session just on asking, and I might in the future. But let's talk about being enthusiastic. We tend to associate enthusiasm with positive attitudes. So share with us some things that we can do to feel - and certainly act - more enthusiastic all the time.

Alan: Well there's a basic principle in psychology. It comes from Doctor William James. He spent 50 years at Harvard researching everything we know about attitude and motivation and at the end of his life, he wrote this sentence, "The greatest discovery of the 20th century is the fact that you can have any quality you want in a personality if you just act as if you have it." For example, you want to be more enthusiastic you can't wait until the problems of life are all gone. That'll never happen. That's called dead. But you start acting enthusiastically and eventually begin to feel that way. The body and mind always strive to be consistent.

I'll tell people if you wait for the attitude to change, if you wait to become enthusiastic, you'll wait forever. It never works that way. And so the key is for enthusiasm, you need to act that way despite how you feel. First comes the action, then comes the feeling, then it becomes contagious, rubs off and builds around you at work – prospects, customers, etc.

Let's talk about some ways to be more of an actor, to become more enthusiastic. First thing I would tell people is to say something positive to every person you meet. And people in sales know about this. Good morning. Glad to see you. A friendly greeting, good eye contact, a smile, a bit of good news; if it's with co-workers, prospects, whomever. And those who are most enthusiastic don't just share positives when they're in the mood, when they most feel like it. When they least feel like it, they most need to say something and the act of that something gets you feeling better about yourself and so does the other person. And you can always find something positive that's sincere, that's genuine. That's number one.

Art: So you’re saying even if we don’t feel great, if we don’t feel like we have a positive attitude, to act like we do, pretend like we do and then that will just naturally start changing?

Alan: Absolutely. A lot of people use somewhat corny slogan, “Fake it till you make it.” But it’s right on target psychologically. It’s kind of like people saying, “Well I’ll be happy if I make that sale. I’ll be enthusiastic when such and such happens.” But it doesn’t work that way. First you’re excited about the product then you make the sale. First believe in yourself then you do the asking.

Art: So it’s not waiting for it to happen, it’s making it happen before it actually is there. Let’s go back to making a positive comment. People out there now might be thinking, “So what am I supposed to do at the beginning of a call? Am I supposed to use the “How are you today?” phrase, and in seminars we always get into a discussion on this.

And my stance on this for our audience is this – if you are going to use it make sure that at least you do sound sincere when you say it, even maybe if you aren’t, make sure you sound it. So again getting back to the acting, because the tone of voice and the way in which you deliver that will make all the difference. There are some people who never ever could say this simply because they can’t pull it off. And there others who just by saying “How are you today?” can engage someone.

So perhaps practice, listen to yourself on tape if you are going to use it, but the key here is to make sure that you’re sounding sincere.

Alan: Yes. And you talk about this in sales. If you’re not exactly feeling that way, there are a couple of simple things you can do. Stand up when you’re making the phone call. You’re going to sound more enthusiastic, more energetic. Get a mirror, look at yourself. Do you have the expression of smiling on your face? If you start acting that way, you’ll sound a little bit more enthusiastic and you’ll begin to feel that way. It won’t be so much talking as actually beginning to feel that way.

A second thing for enthusiasm is you see something positive in every situation. I don’t believe that life is totally good or bad or black or white. Any situation, even a rotten situation, always, always, always has something good in it. If you can see the positive, you maintain the enthusiasm. It may be that somebody says no to you. What was the positive? You got a chance to at least make contact. You practiced your skills. You maintained your confidence. You find something positive.

Churchill who was one of my heroes, had the best definition I ever heard. He said, “The optimist sees the opportunity and every difficulty. The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity.” And that, by the way, is how every company

got started whether they're in financial services or have some kind of product, construction, whatever you're selling. Somebody said years ago, “There's a problem out there in certain areas.” Somebody else said, “Not a problem, it's a chance for a business.” See the positive, and you maintain the enthusiasm.

And even though I write about this and talk about it there's occasions, not many, but there are occasions when I get a little bit down. And when I do, I make myself look for something good around me, always find something, and immediately up comes the attitude.

Art: I'm going to ask you about failure here in a little bit and, of course, many people equate the word 'rejection' with failure and in my program the title of my books is How to Sell More in Less Time with No Rejection. People say, “Well how can you possibly say this? Sales is full of rejection.” Well no, it's not. Only unless you attach rejection to what happens to you. And it's relevant to the point you just made, and that is in every situation you can always take a positive out of it, and what we call this here in my sales process is the secondary objective. I may not get my primary, which is the appointment, the sale, whatever I'm shooting for, but I always can achieve a secondary, which doesn't have to be reliant on them. It could be an attempt oriented on my part.

So at the end of the call I could say, “Well at least I asked this question or at least I left the door open for a future contact.” So then after the call instead of saying, “Oh boy I got rejected again.” I can say, “Well I got a no but at least I found this out.” And then you compound that by the number of calls over the week and the month and the year and then add up the number of positives you have versus the number of negatives and that can mean all the difference between, of course, the positive attitude or just feeling rejected and possibly getting out of sales.

Alan: That's so on target, the secondary objective. If there's something you've achieved, look for it, celebrate that, let it build your self-esteem, build your enthusiasm and not contribute it to a negative attitude.

Art: There's another book that I quote, which has been around for a while, and a number of spin offs, and it's called Don't Sweat the Small Stuff, and it's all small stuff. I remember one thing I took out of there was that regardless of what happens to you, you can always sit back and say, “Okay, but what did I learn from it?” And again that's common sense. Maybe the author didn't come up with that, but it's certainly a good rule to live by.

Alan: I agree totally. The third thing along those lines is to tell your self it just might work. It's a great attitude to have. “It just might work.” According to those brain researchers we have like 50,000 thoughts a day go through our mind. It stands to reason that some of our thoughts are innovative, creative blockbusters. But when a negative person gets a new idea you know what they say to themselves? “Well, that'll never work.”

Think about it from this point of view – everything good in your life that you perhaps achieve, maybe you’ve earned enough money to buy a nice TV set or a nice car in the parking lot. All those things that you enjoy were designed by somebody who thought it just might work. In that regard, the positive thinkers have almost always been more right than the negative thinkers who didn’t start in the first place.

I’ve enjoyed Thomas Edison’s quote. First of all, you all know Edison invented the light bulb. It took him thousands of experiments to get one to work. At that time, when he had failed like 10,000 times, some reporter came to see him and said, “Mr. Edison how does it feel to have failed 10,000 times?” Edison said, “You’re very young aren’t you? I have not failed 10,000 times. I have successfully found 10,000 ways not to do it.” And that attitude, of course, led him to be the greatest inventor of all time.

Another technique is practice positive expectations. As I said before, do something positive in all situations. That’s a present tense strategy – think positive now. This one looks towards the future and expects some good things to happen. In psychology it’s called the self-fulfilling prophecy. If you expect a bad time with a certain customer, you’ll probably find something to gripe about. Expect some good things will take place, probably some good things that’ll happen, but practice positive expectations. I was always a devotee of Norman Vincent Peale and went to his church, listened to his talks, read his books, including of course The Power of Positive Thinking. And he used to do a technique to prove to people that what you expect to happen usually happens. So be careful. Practice positive not negative expectations.

The way he would drive this home, is he’d bring the parishioners to the church on New Years Eve, and have them write what they really expect to happen next year. What do you expect? Write it down, put it in an envelope, and give it to him. Then they would come back the next New Years Eve, give back the envelopes and see if what they wrote came true. It’s almost spooky and amazing that he found that what they did write, did come true. So be careful and practice positive, not negative expectations.

On the last go round he was into his 90s - and died in his 90s - the last go round they passed out the envelopes. The first man read this sentence he had written before, “All I can expect next year is more of the same old miserable life.” He said he got it. One lady happened to be a sales woman. She believed in goal setting, and set about 10 specific goals for the year. She read them back and said yes she had gotten nine of them, most of what she expected.

Somebody else in the group believed in astrology. He was a Capricorn, and read the horoscopes faithfully everyday, believed that’s where truth resided. But he wrote down what Capricorn predicted - that next year you’ll lose your job and

lose your marriage partner. He read those back the following year and said yes, both of things had happened. He was delighted that the horoscopes were right. Strange fellow.

Another lady in the group, also a Capricorn, put down "I expect a big job promotion." and got the job promotion. But the most interesting one was one guy who had died the previous year. When they held the meeting he just couldn't come. What they found was one sentence. It said, "As none of the men in my family have ever lived past the age of 60 I expect I may die next year." He died one month before his 60th birthday, which isn't so strange. I would think most people have seen examples of this. Two people out there are married for years, when one spouse dies. The remaining spouse thinks nothing good is going to happen again, and having no great goals, hobbies or relationships, dies a few weeks or months after their spouse. We've seen close death dates on the face of tombstones.

But the lesson tells me if you want to be a positive professional, then TGIF doesn't cut it, thank God it's Friday. You have to practice those positive expectations for today, tomorrow, six weeks, six months, when I practice those expectations, the stronger the attitude, the stronger the enthusiasm, the driving force.

Art: This one really has always fascinated me and I bring it up at my seminars as well. I'll use the example of income and I'll say, "Picture where you are right now. You couldn't fathom being where you were 10 years ago as far as income because you expect to be here. So why not expect to be 10 or 20 percent higher than you are right now?" And I guess you might say this is what the entire book and the video The Secret is based on, which is the law of attraction. You think about it and it's going to come to you and my feeling is they might've left something out there, and that is you actually have to do something about it. But is there any other research on just the law of expectation and why this happens perhaps regarding behavior?

Alan: Well in biology we talk about tropism and tropism is a striving towards the light. If you put a seed underneath a bunch of dirt or even a slab of concrete that little seed will force itself up through the dirt or up through the concrete and even crack the concrete. It's got this driving force to seek the light of the sunshine. In a similar sense in psychology, we have a tropism. That is what we tend to be visualizing as we talked about before. What we see out there as an expectation. We do everything we possibly can subconsciously to achieve that.

If, for example, I see myself as a loser I'll find some way to lose. If things are going too well I'll screw it up. If I see myself as not being worthy of making this amount of money and I get close to that goal, I may do something that turns off a customer and lose that customer. If I see myself as attracting alcoholics, I may

marry three in a row. Attracting what can be visualized in that tropism. It's a very similar thing biology and psychology that way.

Art: Interesting. On a personal level I remember way back when, probably over 20 years ago when I first started my business as many businesses do or don't in this case, things weren't going that great and I came close to actually throwing in the towel saying, "Well maybe we'll just hang this thing up." But then I sat down and said, "You know that's not even an option. I expect this thing to work and it's going to." And I did. Here I am 20 years later and I always look back and I can remember the day where I said that to myself and I didn't know all of the things that I know now after studying attitude and motivation, and wish I could explain it. But in my case, again, it was not even an option. So the expectation was there.

Alan: And to people I would also recommend to do what's called the appealing process. And that is literally take two, three minutes a day to talk to yourself positively, just like smart people do a physical workout, successful folks do a mental workout too. And it may be as simple as saying, "I believe in myself. I can do it. I'm good at making presentations. I talk well, effectively." I've outlined my product and services. I close this percentage of sales." And Art, as we talked about before, that kind of filling up process makes a big difference.

If I had a bucket of water here and dropped in a stone, obviously I'd displace some of the water. If I put in lots of stones, pretty soon I have lots of stones and very little water. In a very similar sense if you put in lots of affirmations for what your wanting to achieve, after a while those old negative thoughts that have been holding you back are displaced and no longer have control of you.

Well again it may sound silly, but I would recommend people take two minutes a day and just talk to themselves positively.

Art: Well getting back to what sounds silly, to most people who are negative a lot of this will sound silly. And I always find the people who are the skeptics - and you see a lot of them in the media - those are the ones who probably are leading the sad, pathetic lives because they're making fun of the things like this that work.

Going back to the self-affirmations, one thing that I have heard is about making your own self-motivational tape where your taking a lot of these phrases and your recording them, putting them on a tape or digital recording and then play that back...you put it on your iPod or if you still have a cassette recorder. So in addition to you thinking those things you're hearing yourself say it.

Alan: It's a good point because I'll teach this process, take two hours actually to go through it in great detail, exactly what you say to yourself, when you say it, how you say it to achieve all the goals you want to achieve. But the caveat is most people fail because they're not consistent enough. You can't do a few

minutes here, skip a few days over there, try a couple days later and expect to have results. You have to displace years of mind binders. It's consistency every day. You can't miss.

The most common quoted research states that it takes at least 21-days, not missing one single day, to go from conscious to subconscious, to create that mental habit. That doesn't mean in 21 days you've made a million dollars or lost 20 pounds. It means you've got yourself believing the right things, doing the right things, moving in the right direction.

Art: You mean you couldn't just get on a treadmill once and say, "Hey I used the treadmill. I'm in shape."

Alan: Well I'll tell people this phrase, "Don't be fooled by progress." People take your two hands and stretch them out two feet apart. Tell the left hand, "These are my goals, my affirmations I want to achieve in sales." Your right hand represents achieving all those goals. What happens to some people is they'll begin doing their affirmations, goal setting day after day and the left hand moves closer to the right hand until you get it half way in the middle. "Good heavens I'm making a better income, doing better on cold calling, doing whatever more effectively." This guy, "I lost 20 pounds," or "I lost three pounds." And they're not quite there, they haven't made the whole goal yet. When things are going better that's when almost everybody stops doing their affirmations. They don't crave it quite so much, don't need it quite so badly, so they stop saying them.

And what happens? They always go back to zero. That's why you start diets over and over again or exercise programs. Don't be fooled by progress. Follow all the way through it to completion.

Art: But we can celebrate progress right?

Alan: Absolutely, we should be celebrating all the time. The mistake is people think they're doing better and they just stop doing the basics. You see that in sales. What brought you there they stop doing.

Another kind of thing in terms of the enthusiasm we're talking about is you have to survey your strengths. It's so easy to list what might be needing improvement, and I'll tell people to write down 50, a hundred, 200 things you're good at, all your strengths, talents, abilities. Maybe you're honest. Maybe you're preserving. Maybe you're upbeat. Maybe you have product knowledge. Whatever it is, write them all down, because when you least feel enthusiastic, when you doubt yourself the most, you won't be able to think of those things. So go back and read the list when your having a tough day. Remind yourself you're not a bad person, you're just having a difficult time. I did that for close to 15 years, and added to my briefcase that I carry around a list of things that I had as positive strengths.

Those that know me personally know my background, with my mother committing suicide and father being an alcoholic, brother in prison – grew up in a difficult situation. I tell people you can get it for yourself if you need to, and that’s part of the process. Survey your strengths, write them down, adding to your list.

Art: Let’s talk about the next point here, and I cheated because I actually know what your going to say next, and I am a huge believer in this because I believe without this, of course, nothing else matters. There are a lot of people who actually will read the books and then perhaps have the right intention. But without this nothing else matters.

Alan: Yeah the follow through. You know the old phrase that practice makes perfect. Well that’s not true. It’s perfect practice makes perfect and permanent, and if people don’t do the right kinds of things long enough it doesn’t have an affect.

One other strategy that you might find useful, as well as the various listeners, is called the positive/but principle and that is, even though this negative might have happened but on the other hand... It’s kind of like the second objective you achieve on the sales call. Maybe I didn’t achieve the first result, but I achieved the second one. In my two-day program I call Journey to Extraordinary, people take a piece of paper like I talked about before, with a line down the middle. On the left hand side, write down the word ‘problems.’ Write down all your problems – personal, professional, whatever it might be. Every problem on the left hand side must be counteracted with a blessing on the right hand side.

I had a lady in the program; who actually was a retired sales woman in her 80s - retired 10, 15 years - still coming to programs wanting to learn and make life as good as possible. And she wrote down this – on the problem side “I lost my husband recently but on the other side I still have my children.” She wrote down on the problem side “I lost a lot of money on my stocks – dropped drastically. But I have my house, which is paid for. My hearing has gotten rather poor, but I can still see very well to read. My son moved out of town, but he still calls me on the phone every week.” And she’s to the point. You can focus on the fact that you lost a husband, lost some money, lost some hearing and a son that moved, and you can be as depressed as you want to be.

If you can focus on the side over here, that I’ve got kids that are alive, a house that’s paid for, sight that works and a kid that calls, that can be extremely positive. And that’s exactly how attitude works. What you choose to focus on makes the biggest difference. It’s called the positive/but principle – write down the problems, then counteract on the other side.

Art: Quite often in sales we suggest that you don't use the word 'but' because it tends to diminish what you said before. But this of course is the exception and again it's looking for the positive in whatever might happen to you.

Well let's move on to the whole topic of failure. In sales probably more so than any other profession, we expose our self to failure all the time. In fact if we don't we're not talking to prospects and customers. So please share with us how we can look at what many people might call failure - and that's getting no's on sales calls - and still maintain that positive attitude?

Alan: Good question. Yes your in a high risk profession where failure's part of the job. And I have a great respect for failure in the sense that it can be a very positive thing. But disrespect in the way most people approach failure or deal with it.

When you look at the research, those who most have been very successful, millionaires, for example - the average millionaire has gone bankrupt or lost significant amounts of money several times before they became successful - but turned it around with their attitude towards that failure and the key phrase for those who experience failure, who turn it around is next time. Maybe I didn't achieve the objective this time but next time – tweak this way. I'll take this approach and there's a slogan that I've used – failures is not the falling down, but it's the staying down.

So what are two or three things you can do if you fail in sales or anything else in life? First of all, refuse to blame anyone or anything for your failure. If your going to blame the economy, your going to blame the recession, your going to blame the territory, the sales manager, the spouse for lack of support, whatever you blame, as long as your in a blaming mode, you are stuck and will not go forward. There's no motivation to go forward. After all, if it's somebody else's fault. I take no responsibility. There's no accountability.

So what we must do when there's a failure and you can't achieve the objective you want – accept total responsibility for that. In other words it's not what somebody else did, but what can I learn from that? What can I do different next time?

A second thing – when you're dealing with failure, avoid the "why" question and ask the "what" question. What losers do - negative folks do - when they go through a failure, is they'll ask "Why do I have to go through this? Why me? Life isn't fair? Why? Why? Why?" Sometimes there's not always an answer to that question and you can be stuck going back to blaming again.

A more helpful question is "What can I do about this? How to proceed? What's next?" Look at the way you respond to that failure. What's the question you're asking yourself?

Another thing is to stay calm. Some people will get depressed, some get anxious, some can't sleep, some stop their exercise program, others worry, do all kinds of things, none of which will help anything in failure. Stay calm, whether it's deep breathing, relaxation, talk to a positive friend, take a walk.

I can tell you may not feel that way - as I talked about before, but if you can stay calm, your mind has a chance to think, to work. And in a tense state we cannot think rationally. You can't think of the next step, can't think of what to do. But stay calm.

Another thing is your dealing with failure. Obviously you don't want to fail, and maybe you're afraid of trying that something again. You're stuck trying something that seems safer. Eleanor Roosevelt said years ago, "Do the thing you fear and the death of fear is certain." That's right. Maybe you're afraid of doing certain things. Maybe it's cold calling. Maybe it's prospecting. The more you do that, of course, the less fear you have. Do the thing you fear and fear will go away.

Art: It is quite interesting that sometimes people will have an account or prospect they know they need to call and they'll have that either pulled up on a window on their computer or have the file there on their desk and it's just staring at them and they're avoiding it and they're putting in more effort in avoiding it - which of course then is eating away at their attitude - then actually just picking up the phone and just doing it. And we can apply almost everything we've talked about up to this point including taking action and asking yourself, "What's the worse thing that can happen?" And you're much better off by simply doing it, since you realize that what we probably feared in the first place didn't happen or wasn't going to happen.

Alan: Well it's like in the customer service world, if you've got bad business to tell a customer. And you put off that phone call. You put it off. You put it off. Whenever the phone rings you grit your teeth. You start perspiring. Just get over it. Just do it anyway. The quicker you do it the less negative feelings you have to deal with.

I would tell people also when it comes to failure; the problem is not the problem. That sounds kind of strange. The fact that you didn't achieve something is not the problem. The problem that typically gets in the way is your reaction to it by getting bitter, panicky, worried - those are the problems. Not the fact that you didn't get the objective right away. And those things, if you start getting those negative behaviors, will stop you from going further by taking it personally, by making too big of a deal out of this. What's my reaction? The problem is not the problem, it's your reaction to it.

Art: I agree and one quote I always use - and again I'm not quite sure who first came up with this, and I have amended it slightly - but stuff happening to you in

sales is inevitable, and the rejection or the failure is always optional, and it's how you react to it.

Alan: Muhammad Ali had a great quote when it came to failure and determination and sticking it out. Ali said, "I hated every minute of training but I said don't quit. Suffer now, and spend the rest of your life as a champion." I think he's right.

Art: I agree.

Alan: The other things I've mentioned in terms of failure, that I find helpful, is look at the next time, look at your reaction. Stay calm, do the thing you fear, look at it as a learning experience for most things.

Art: Alan this has been extremely valuable. I do know that we really just scratched the surface of the fabulous material that you have to offer on attitude, motivation and peak performance. So do this, please share with our listeners some information on your other resources and how they can get a hold of you.

Alan: Well my website is simply DrZimmerman.com, that's D-R, Zimmerman dot com. I've got a number of CD albums on which I talk about how you take charge of your life and your career. CD albums are Creating Mind Over Matter, Taking Control of Your Subconscious Mind - things on interpersonal excellence.

I can lead others. I can motivate them. And one of the key things that people rave about is my two day program called Journey to the Extraordinary: 12 Steps to Find Your Road Map to Success and it is a life changing experience. I offer that twice a year in different parts of the country. Information is on the website about that also.

Art: And you also have a weekly e-mail newsletter?

Alan: Yeah. We have hundreds of thousands of folks that get my weekly e-zine. It's called Dr. Zimmerman's Tuesday Tip. About every week on Tuesday obviously. I write on things like motivation, attitude, relationships, excellence, difficult people. Hopefully very practical information, fun to read, easy to use and it's been a resource that's been valued by lots and lots of folks. And it's available to all your listeners free of charge as a service. And if they went to my website DrZimmerman.com they could find out how to sign up there. In fact when they sign up besides getting a nice great subscription every week they get a free e-book from me as well as a coupon to buy some of our products at discount prices.

Art: And they'll be able to get your book Pivot at your site as well. Is that right?

Alan: Yeah they'll find the book there Pivot. It's called Pivot, with the subtitle called How One Turn in Attitude Can Lead to Success. Every chapter gives lots of exercises that you can actually use to create that winning, lasting attitude.

Art: Again on a personal level I can tell our listeners that I own just about every single motivational, inspiration book or CD program and tape program out there, and truly Alan's material is as good as or better than most everything out there. So I encourage everyone out there - all you sales people - if you want to go to the next level, then take advantage of some of Alan's material. And most definitely go back and listen to this CD several times.

So once again on behalf of our members and listeners, thank you Alan. Thanks for sharing this wonderful information for the Telesales Success Platinum Audio Seminar. I'm Art Sobczak.