

Desperate Money Never Wins

By
Marianne Edwards

Have you ever taken on a client or a job that you just knew wasn't right for you but you really needed the money? "Desperate money never wins", my mother used to say. If you find yourself in such a situation, look for the opportunity to create something better now and in the future. Start by asking yourself a few questions to isolate the problem. Is this your ideal client? On a scale of 1-10, how close is this client to ideal? If you answered 6 or more, what could make this client a "10"? If 5 or lower than 5, perhaps you are unclear about who your ideal client is. Take a few minutes to consider who you would really like to work with and describe that client in as much detail as you can.

Often the problem with a particular client can be characterized as a mismatch of values. When values clash, conflict is the result. If you don't want this client's business, the situation may be telling you something very important about what you value vs. what your client values.

Values reflect who you really are. Values include things like truth, integrity, beauty, excellence, respect, strength, fairness, freedom, adventure, generosity, and peace. What are some of your values? What are some of the things your client values? My guess is that, if you have worked with this client before, you know where the disconnect is in your respective values. But, that doesn't mean you have to turn the business away. Perhaps there is an opportunity to change the relationship by being clearer about how you want to work with this client. Or, is it possible that you are ignoring what your client values? Hmmmm? A common trap, especially among business owners who are highly creative, is making the business all about them and their creative vision, while ignoring or even denigrating their client in the process. If serving the client is not one of your values, make it one. Many conflicts can be dissolved by simply honoring what the client values. For example, if your client likes detail and analysis, just waiving your arms around and being vague will create tension, frustration and distrust. Match your approach with the client's style and values and see how quickly the situation improves.

There will be times when the gap between what you value and what your client values is so wide that it cannot be bridged. I took on a client last year that I suspected had a substance abuse problem. It quickly became evident that this client did have an addiction and was unwilling to consider a treatment program. Since I place a very high value on willingness as an essential component of achieving any goal, the gap between our values was just too great.

Another reason you may feel you have to take business you really don't want is because you have not created sufficient cash reserves to put you at a point of choice. Making the accumulation of cash reserves a priority will free you from "having to take the business".

Finally, if you have ever taken on a job or a client that you had a bad feeling about, you may have convinced yourself to ignore your insides because the money was great or you really needed it. Did you kick yourself later?

Want to eliminate the problem forever of taking on a client for the wrong reasons? Here's how . . .

- **Know who your ideal client is.** Get very clear about the type of client and work that is the most fun and rewarding. Then make a plan to get more of that business.
- **Honor your values.**
- **Build cash reserves.** The more money you have in reserve, the more freedom and choices you will have in your business. Make it a practice to put a portion of all you earn into reserve.
- **Listen to your gut.** Your intuition is an early warning system to keep you safe. It is far less costly to act on what it tells you than to recover from whatever it is trying to keep you from.
- **Practice saying “NO”.** If you think you “should” take the business, you already know you don't want it.

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Mariette Edwards is a business and career strategist, consultant, speaker and writer. Mariette publishes Star Maker News, a free monthly on-line newsletter dedicated to professional success. Visit her web site at www.starmakercoaching.com for more information.
<mailto:mariette@starmakercoaching.com>
www.starmakercoaching.com



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