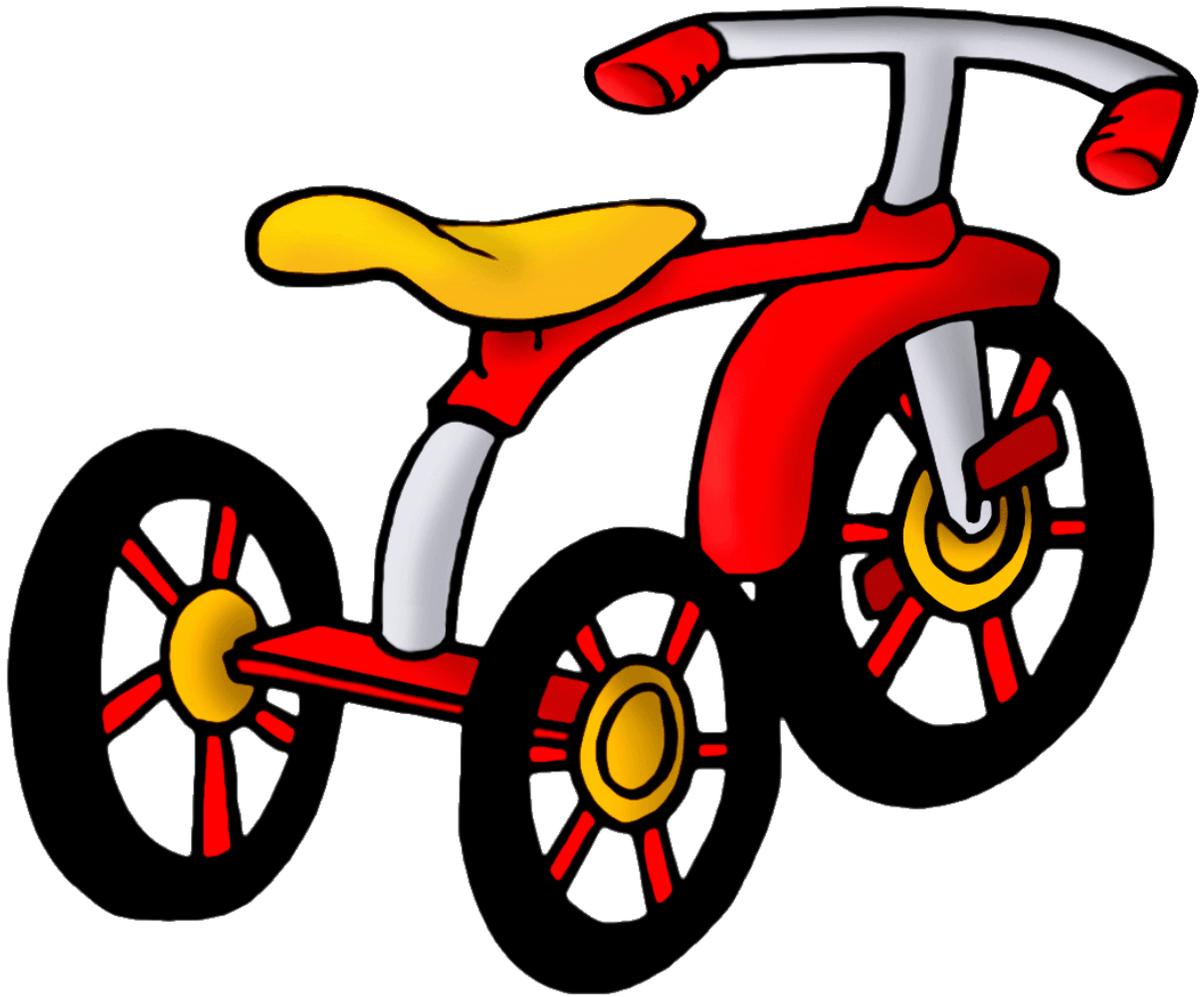


The



Tricycle

By Steve M. Rigby

## The Tricycle

You may recall reading in Chapter Four about the Harvard Business School study on “The Triangle of Learning.” The researchers at Harvard identified three areas in which most companies focus their training: selling skills, attitude, and product knowledge, with the latter accounting for 95 percent of their sales training efforts. What I didn’t mention was that when they evaluated the performance of those trained, and what their success was ultimately attributed to, they were surprised and dismayed to find that only 15 percent of their sales success could be linked to knowledge of the product. That’s right: 15 percent! That meant that 85 percent of their success was a result of selling skills and attitude.

But they didn’t reveal which of *these* two was more important. Nor did they mention the principles that salespeople bring to the table that also play such a critical role. But don’t fret, a tricycle is going to help us address all of this, and more.



As you might have guessed, circles will be used to begin the discussion of our tricycle. The first circle is represented by the front wheel, the most important of the three. That’s the one that gets the tricycle moving. It’s the one with the pedals. And since a positive **ATTITUDE** is what gets *us* moving, we will associate it with the front wheel. A **positive attitude** gives us the desire, the drive, the push to get us where we want to go. It’s the “want to do,” the motivation. And since we just learned where motivation comes from, we recognize our front wheel is really our **Circle of “Others.”**

This desire, this drive, this push (whatever you want to call it) is really about energy: in this case, positive. But there is an opposite to this positive energy—a negative energy—or a **negative attitude**. And finally, there is yet a third energy, another attitude we need to be aware of: neutral energy, or a **neutral attitude**. Now if we translate this to our tricycle, we recognize that there is only one of these three that will move us forward to where we want to go: a **positive attitude**.

So an attitude comes with options, with choices, with a decision to make. Which means it is right smack in the middle of our **Circle of “Cans.”** If we want to have a positive attitude, we can. If we want to have a neutral one, we can have that. And if we want to have a negative attitude, we can have that, too. It’s our choice. We are in total control of that decision. And I know of no decision we can make each and every day that will have more impact on our success, whether personally or professionally, than the type of attitude we will have. It’s a make-or-break kind of deal. Having a positive attitude will *make* you. Having a negative one, or not having one at all, will *break* you. It’s just that simple.

I've learned that there are some times and places where we're almost always guaranteed to have a great attitude. For me, sipping frozen margaritas on my boat dock with close friends, sporting swim suits, T-shirts, and flip-flops, is one of those times and places. It was during one of those "great attitude" moments that Roy Moore, one of my dearest friends, shared the most interesting story regarding attitude I may have ever heard. Here is his story:

When I was 17 years old and a senior in high school, I worked after school and on weekends on a large ranch owned by an oil company. I had done this type of work for several years, had acquired numerous skills, and very much enjoyed the work. However, I had developed a bad habit of complaining. Apparently this habit was very annoying to Hank, the ranch manager and my boss, and probably to others as well.

One day I was trimming the hooves of a horse, a skill that I had learned from the farriers (horse shoers) that the ranch paid to work on the horses. I was quite proud of the fact that I could perform this important task, but on this day I was complaining about the heat, about the weight of the horse as it was leaning on me, and about the flies. My boss came walking up to the barn, heard my mumbling, and told me to pack up my things, that I was fired. He said he was tired of listening to me complain all the time. Well, I was stunned. I didn't really mean what I had said. I liked doing that kind of work and really loved working there, so I told him I wouldn't complain anymore. But, it didn't matter. He wouldn't change his mind, and I lost a great job.

But *all* wasn't lost because I chose to learn from what happened. From that moment on I decided I would start changing my attitude. If something bothered me, I either learned to deal with it or found a way to correct whatever was wrong without saying anything. I didn't bring problems to my future bosses. Instead, I brought solutions.

After high school and college, I took a job with another oil company. It too was a great job, and after a few years of hard work I became the engineering supervisor with many people working for me, and I had a great boss. Because he worked in another city, he would call once a week to discuss things. One day he told me that he always called the other supervisors working under him first and me last. He said that the others always had complaints, but that I only had good things to say, and he always felt better after talking to me. I received a nice promotion and moved on to bigger and better things.

To this day, I can still remember that whole scene in the barn: holding that horse's hoof between my legs, the horse leaning on me, my complaining, and Hank telling me that I was fired. I owe Hank a huge thank you. He helped me learn an important lesson that day that changed the rest of my life: that I can choose my attitude, every single day.

What a story, and what a lesson. When American businessman, author, and philanthropist W. Clement Stone shared his thoughts on attitude, he was quoted as saying,

*There is little difference in people,  
but that little difference makes a big difference.  
The little difference is attitude.  
The big difference is whether it is positive or negative.*

I believe Roy would agree.

Remarking on the importance of attitude in his sport, famed Olympic figure skater Scott Hamilton's thoughts were clear and to the point:

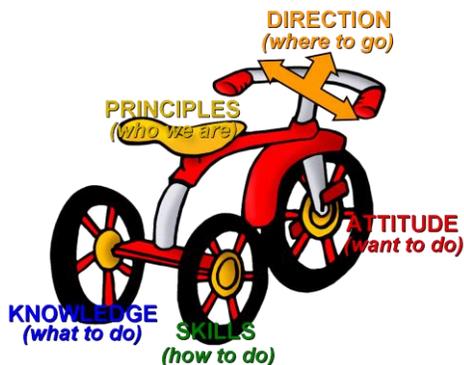
*The only disability in life is a bad attitude.*

I believe Hank would agree with that.

Noted author and educator Carolyn Warner certainly understood the power of attitude when she stated,

*I am convinced that attitude is the key to success or failure in almost any of life's endeavors. Your attitude—your perspective, your outlook, how you feel about yourself, how you feel about other people—determines your priorities, your actions, your values. Your attitude determines how you interact with other people and how you interact with yourself.*

I believe we *all* can agree with that.



Since “where” we go can be equally important, the handle bars linked to the front wheel of our tricycle give us the ability to choose the **DIRECTION** we want to go. The flow of our **Circle Selling®** dance floor gives us the direction in which we hope to lead our dance partner.

Now to our other two circles: the back wheels. One represents the **KNOWLEDGE**, or the “what to do,” that we know is so vitally important. The other circle, our final wheel, represents the **SKILLS** required to know “how to do” what it is we want to do. Now if

we think about the purpose of the back wheels on a real tricycle, we realize they are there to give support, providing a level of comfort and stability. They're good things to have. Likewise, with our “selling” tricycle, the wheels representing **KNOWLEDGE** and **SKILLS** provide the support we

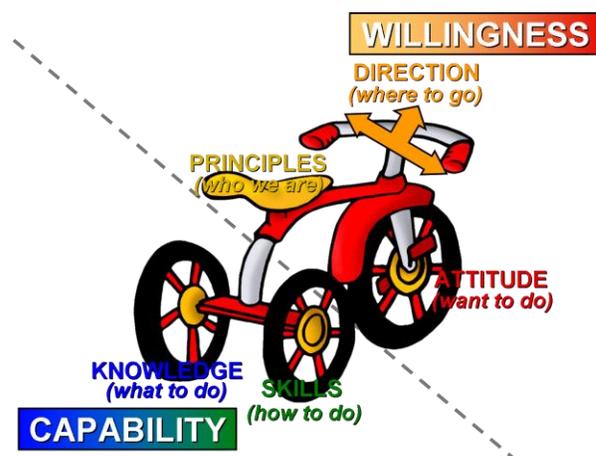
need so we can take full advantage of that powerful front wheel. From a selling perspective, they're good for us to have, too. For without that support, we'd be trying to negotiate our way around on a unicycle—just our front wheel of attitude—and that could become quite exhausting after a while.

Now to the seat of our tricycle. It represents the **PRINCIPLES** we bring with us, such as integrity, honesty, respect, loyalty, temperance, fair play, and humility. Because our work in sales involves people—our dance partners—these **PRINCIPLES** are the things our partners will appreciate most. Our **2<sup>nd</sup> Rule of Shopping** serves as a reminder of the importance of living by the **PRINCIPLES** that earn us that level of trust. Without them, our guests are likely not to buy from us. And we all know that.

*The most important ingredient we put into a relationship is not what we say or what we do, but what we are.*  
 ~ Dr. Stephen Covey

## How Does This Apply to Sales?

Our tricycle brings together everything we've talked about on our dance floor, and then some. The **KNOWLEDGE** required to understand the dynamics of our **Seven Rules of Shopping** and our **Circle Selling®** model is represented by the image of one of the back wheels. The development of the **SKILLS** necessary to learn how to **CONNECT** with our partners; to ask questions correctly in order to listen properly and **COMPREHEND** their needs; to **CONTRIBUTE** what we know in a way that meets those needs and improves our partners' situations; and to structure the wording and timing of the **CONFIRMING** statements and questions to get our partners to "yes" are *all* covered with *our other back wheel*.



But it's the differences we're about to discover regarding our tricycle that may prove to be most insightful. By simply drawing a line between the back and front wheels of our tricycle, we can get a clear picture of what also separates ordinary salespeople from the truly extraordinary ones. The back wheels of our tricycle tell us whether we are *capable* of doing our job: do we possess, or have we attained, both the **KNOWLEDGE** and the **SKILLS** necessary to be *competent* at what we do? Or in simpler terms, *can* we do our job? Most of us are more than capable of developing our back wheels to the point of

being quite competent.

But it's the front wheel of **ATTITUDE** that distinguishes the extraordinary from the ordinary. A positive attitude is synonymous with "willingness": *will* we do what we are capable of doing? There's a monumental difference between **will** and **can**. Assuming we bring the right **PRINCIPLES** to our tricycle, our willingness to acquire and then apply the **KNOWLEDGE** and **SKILLS** that are represented by those back wheels will be *the* determining factor for the level of success we enjoy in sales. Possessing the **KNOWLEDGE** of our dance floor and the **SKILLS** of how to dance are of little value if we're not willing to take our partner by the hand and lead him or her through an extraordinary experience.

During my years of developing others, the best employees I ever hired were those who possessed "willingness." One of those successes was 23-year-old Tiffany Torgan. She was fresh out of college and had never sold anything in her life. When I asked why I should hire her, Tiffany sold me with her answer: "I bring no bad habits to sales and am willing to do whatever you teach me to do. I will never question whether it will work. I'll just do it." She kept her promise and quickly became one of the top sales professionals on our team. In the 20 years since she has never lost that willingness to do what must be done. Today Tiffany is one of the most successful real estate agents in all of San Diego.

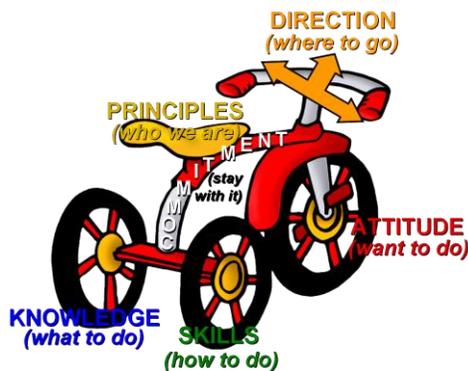
The words of Rhonda Britten, a life coach and corporate trainer, echo the same thoughts regarding the importance of "willingness": *"Being willing makes you able."* So if you DON'T do the things that are being suggested in this book, it probably has little to do with you being able. The problem almost certainly will lie in your NOT being willing.

The words of Italian writer and statesman Niccolo Machiavelli are also worth considering: *"Where the willingness is great, the difficulties cannot be great."* Nothing you're being asked to do is difficult, overwhelming, or insurmountable. Developing the knowledge and skills of how to apply what you're learning about **Circle Selling®** will take time, practice, and effort. But what new skills have you ever tried to learn that didn't require a little work? Fact is, though, when you take it a little at a time, it *is* achievable. Just like eating an elephant.

## The "Complete" Tricycle

I have noticed that with the majority of the things in life we choose to do, that we seldom, if ever, decide how good we want to be at it when we first begin. Instead, experience tells me that most of us try something out for a while, see how it feels, see if we find something we enjoy or like, see if we're good at it, see if we take to it. And then when we *do* discover that "thing" in which everything seems to come together, we begin to fall in love with it. And when we fall in love with it, passion takes over and causes us to want to "stay with it" until we not only become great at it, but *stay* great at it.

*There is no greatness without a passion to be great, whether it's the aspiration of an athlete or an artist, a scientist, a parent, or a businessperson.*  
~ Anthony Robbins



I suggest that the choice to “stay with it” that is fueled by our passion leads to **COMMITMENT**. And this dedication to “stay with it” is represented by the frame of our tricycle. It allows us to remove the line that divided it in half and bring it back together in a way that truly makes it whole. **COMMITMENT** holds *everything* together. It harnesses the power and energy of “want to do” and makes certain the “what to do” and the “how to do” get done.

**ATTITUDE** starts us. **DIRECTION** guides us. **KNOWLEDGE** and **SKILLS** enable us. **PRINCIPLES** ground us. And **COMMITMENT** sustains us. It ensures that we will stay the course.

Perhaps the advice of architect and author Harold Taylor is most appropriate at this moment. Taylor tells us,

*The roots of true achievement lie in the will to become the best that you can become.*

Ordinary salespeople are satisfied with just being okay at what they do, but not extraordinary sales professionals. They want to be the best. But not the best “*in* the world.” They want to be the best “*for* the world”: Another pearl I learned from Dewitt.

The question for you becomes “How good do *you want to be*?” How big is that “front wheel” on your tricycle? Think about that; it’s your choice. It’s your decision. It’s up to you.