BUILDING
YOUR IDEAL PRACTICE

Private Practice Marketing Secrets Mentoring Program
Module Six Transcript

Getting Hired:
Converting Prospects to Clients
The Key to Private Practice Success

David Steele: Welcome to module six of your Private Practice Marketing Secrets Mentoring Program. Today we are going to talk about getting hired and converting prospects to clients, which I consider to be the key to private practice success. On page one of your Study Guide, I have a four-step action plan that I'd like you to act upon when we get off the call today. Step one - Choose three strategies to get prospects to engage you and implement them, and we'll cover what those are.

Step two - Practice three enrollment conversations in the next 10 days. Practice makes perfect. When you're practicing, you're doing it with people who aren't necessarily prospective clients - your friends, your family or your dog or cat. This is just to get some practice, so that you're more comfortable in the real situation. When you're trying on something new, it's good to get comfortable so that when the real situation comes along, and you're talking with a real live prospective client, you have some practice under your belt.

Step three - Chose a follow-up strategy and implement that, and we'll talk about how important follow-up is. We have talked about that before, especially in terms of following up with prospects to actually get them to hire you. And Step four - Most importantly, take the 24-hour challenge. We're going to cover that at the end of our module today. The 24-hour challenge is wonderful and very cool. It will result in you getting hired - I promise. So let's roll.

On page two of the Study Guide, here's what we're going to cover: How to get your prospects to engage you; the 11 points of an effective enrollment conversation; what not to talk about in an enrollment conversation, and that's equally important. Next we'll cover four closing questions that will fill your practice and get you hired, and how to guide your prospects past their fears and inertia.

Fear and inertia are the two forces that will prevent your prospects from hiring you, so we need to recognize that and know what to do with it. We'll cover the most effective follow-up strategies, and more. I actually have my secret weapon to what I consider to be the number one objection that prospects have, that number one thing that holds them back; so we'll cover that as well.

So here we go, Section 1, on page two of the Study Guide - How to get prospects to engage you. There are six alternatives that I have for you today. There's probably more, but these are the main six. But before we get into them, I'd like to discuss a key concept involving 'bluebirds' vs. 'boulders'.

When you market your practice - and marketing is communicating what you do - you will generate prospects. It's nice when those prospects become clients all by themselves. They practically skip the enrollment step and enroll themselves, and we call them 'bluebirds'. They just fly in your window, tweeting and singing. They're so excited and think, "This is so great. I can't wait to get started."

However, 80-90 percent of your prospects will be 'boulders'. Boulders are the prospects that are interested and appear as if they would really like to work with you, but they have some questions and reservations, and they're not quite ready to step up and hire you. What do you do with them? In the past, in my practice, I had no idea what to do with them.

Specializing in couples, my Yellow Page ad said, "Couples in Crisis". It was very easy. People called me up, they were in crisis and they made an appointment. The ones that didn't make an appointment, I had no idea what to do with them, especially when they called me up and asked, "What's your success rate? How much do you charge? Where did you go to school? Do you provide a guarantee?" If they weren't ready to just book an appointment, then I had no idea what to do with them and how to respond to, what felt to me like, crazy-making questions. I never quite had an elegant answer for any of them.

As a result of today's module, I would like you to be extremely adept at handling these crazy-making questions, and to be smooth and elegant, and just reel your prospects in so that they end up hiring you. So you have bluebirds versus boulders. Bluebirds are wonderful and we want a full practice of them, and eventually that will happen. But in the beginning, most of your prospects will be boulders.

I have a philosophy about this, which is to target the boulders. Create your marketing and enrollment systems to target the boulders, the most resistant and difficult prospects to enroll, and guess what, the bluebirds will follow. You don't have to worry about the bluebirds because they're going to enroll themselves anyway, but we can't just focus on the bluebirds because there are never enough of them.

So what are we going to do? Here are six ways to get prospects to engage you. The first is to use a call to action that effectively answers these four critical marketing questions. A call to action is inviting people to do something, and in this case, it's to engage you. The four critical marketing questions are: What's this about? What's in it for me? Can I trust you? Do I feel good about this? In everything you do, whether it is a flier, a brochure, a website, an announcement, an email, a call to action delivered verbally or in writing, or a YouTube video, it must answer all four of these questions immediately, right off the top. So let's talk about each one a little bit.

What's this about? It should be so obvious that they shouldn't have to figure it out. How many times have you seen an advertisement or a website and scratched your head and asked, "Huh? What's this about? What's going on here?" And it's even sometimes hard to find out what it's about. You click through links and you still can't figure what it's about. If it's a prospect, they are not going to be motivated to spend time and energy to figure out what it's about, so you need to answer that question right up front.

What's in it for me? This is the big benefit. What are they going to get? That's what a benefit is, it's what they are going to get. Now there's a difference between a feature and a benefit. Let's say I have a website about my services, and I say that I'm conveniently located, affordable, been in practice for 30 years, and have wheelchair access to my office. Are those benefits or are those features? They are all features. None of those things actually deliver a result to the client.

So let's say that I'm dealing with stressed out real estate agents, and I say on my website that you will boost your productivity by 30 percent, double your sales within six months, win more friends and influence people, achieve more balance, relaxation and fun in your life - those are benefits. Those are what the stressed out real estate agents will actually get as a result of my service. So with the 'what's in it for me' question, always state the big benefit.

And it's wonderful when the benefit can be stated in the domain name, the URL, in the name of your business or in the headline, so that they don't have to search for it. So if my domain name is GreatRelationshipsForYou.com, that's the benefit that I'm going to deliver to you - great relationships.

And then the self-selecting question is the question that you ask the readers to help them identify whether this is for them or not. Do you want great relationships? Do your relationships suck? Have you tried everything else and failed? Are you ready for something that really works? My ideal client might read these self-selecting questions and say, "Yep, that's me. I've come to the right place." So that's another way of targeting your audience.

The people in your niche, your ideal clients have a lot in common in terms of who they are, what challenges they experience, and what results they want in their life and in working with you. You need to get to know them intimately, which is why we highly advocate market research, and then to speak to the biggest benefits that they really want and really need. If you have some secondary benefits there, you're going to lose them. Some things would be nice, like side effects, but you want the primary benefits clearly stated.

So if you're a relationship coach and you have GreatRelationshipsForYou.com, and I'm single and I want to find a soul mate, and you have your big benefit there saying, "Get along with your co-workers and increase your productivity by 40 percent", I'll look at that and say that's a good thing, but it's not necessarily what I really want deep down. It's not going to compel me to hire you. So we need to answer the 'what's in it for me' question very directly to the deepest, biggest benefits, needs, challenges and goals that our ideal client has.

And then, can I trust you? There are many ways to answer this question. One way is by a title - David Steele - Relationship Coach or David Steele, MA, LMFT, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Founder of Relationship Coaching Institute - that would provide credibility and would help to answer the 'can I trust you' question more.

On a website, you don't necessarily want the home page to be all about you answering this question. The look and feel of the website will help answer the question, just by the impression and the emotional hit that people get. But having a link where they can easily find out more about you, helps answer the question. So 'About the Coach' or 'About Us'.

And remember, your photo has to be there. That helps them trust you and develop a relationship with you. It is a waste for the private practice professional to put up a website and not have a photo there. So make it easy to find out about you. You don't have to have your whole CV there with all of your experience and where you went to elementary school --but the relevant facts and information, what people need to know about you in order to trust you. Couple of other things that will help people trust you involve testimonials and endorsements. If other people say great things about you, then you must be OK.

Another thing that helps people trust you is to have your phone number, physical address on the brochure or the business card or the website. They see that you are a real person and you are reachable. If you see a business card, a brochure, a website doesn't have a phone number or a physical address, some basic contact information is missing, people wonder what are you hiding. You might not be hiding anything but the lack of information causes them to wonder.

So the fourth critical marketing question is: do I feel good about this? You want them to feel good about the idea of working with you or buying your product or whatever it is. We are in a field, not only is it a personal intimate service, but we want to help people in their lives. We want to help them be successful and happy and fulfilled and productive and they are generally motivated by the desire to evolve and grow and be happy and successful.

There are lots of professions, lots of businesses that market to fear and they get the customer to buy in order to avoid some catastrophic consequence. Buy this insurance or else your family will be on the street if you get hit by a bus. Now that might work if you are selling insurance, it might work for a lot of things, but in a private practice, you want people to feel good and excited and positive and hopeful about working with you. Don't be tempted to market negatively. They won't feel good about themselves, they won't feel good about you. It will backfire. Even if you get them to hire you, they won't want to talk about working with you, they won't want to refer to you because they don't feel good about themselves and not necessarily going to want to continue to work with you over a long period of time.

So you want them to feel good about this and there is many ways to help them do that. The primary way is to market positively, market to the solutions, not the problems, market to the benefits of what they really, really want and really, really need to get out of working with instead of all the catastrophic things that they will be able to avoid by working with you.

So that is how to get prospects to engage you, #1. A call to action that effectively answers the four critical marketing questions. And the call to action can be anything from "call me now for your free initial consultation on how to have great relationships." Or it could be "sign up for this gem, this great e-program on how to have great relationships." A call to action is anything that you want the person to do. "Click here for more information on how to have great relationships." "Sign up for this workshop by this date for a 50 percent discount on how to have great relationships." But the call to action is key. It is stimulating and compelling your prospect into action to engage you and do something.

#2, this is pretty easy. We have already talked about it a little bit. Provide choices for contacting you on your website, on your business card, on your brochure, on your emails, have a variety of ways that people can contact you. Have your mailing address easy to find. Are they really going to mail you anything? Probably not, but it helps them trust you and helps them get the sense that you are a real person, you live and work in a real physical location.

How about email, fax, I got an order from my shopping cart yesterday and the person that ordered, they had a question and their preferred method of contacting them was fax and that is the first time I have ever seen that, but it happens. So the thing is people like choices and when you give them choices, they tend to feel good about you, they like having choices and they will choose the one that they are most comfortable with.

There are some people that really need to talk to you on the phone, the telephone is the thing, they need to be able to hear your voice and connect with you on the phone first. That is what they are used to, that's their primary mode of starting up a relationship with you.

There are others that they like email first. They like to have a conversation and correspondence in writing, by email first, and maybe arranging a phone call. There are others that just like to skip all that and just meet in person. So provide choices for contacting you.

A good idea is to have an 800 number because then that lowers any barrier that somebody might feel to making a long distance call or wondering if it is a long-distance call. You can even have your 800-number there and your regular number there. That's a good thing. People see that you have a real physical location and you are not afraid to show where it is and you have an 800 number there for convenience for people that want to be able to call you toll free. And having an 800 number is not a big deal and there are a number of things you can do with it.

A service that I use is called FreedomVoice. http://www.fvsystems.com/21250 It is very, very affordable. It provides my voicemail box system, multiple voicemail boxes, for my business. I can forward the 800 number so that it immediately rings to any telephone I want it to ring to, or I can just have it ring to voicemail.

So, having an 800 number is a great choice to provide people. It doesn't need to be the only choice. In fact, it shouldn't be the only choice. Having your actual phone number there, having your email there, having your website there--even having your fax there and your mailing address there.

And then there's things like, nowadays, people like to contact you by instant messaging, so have your IM information there. In the future, it's going to be video conferencing. And there's all sorts of new technologies for staying in touch with each other. So realize that, as many choices as you can give people to contact you, they like it because they will choose the one they're most comfortable with.

So, strategy number two is: provide multiple choices for contacting you. And make those easy to find if you want people to engage you.

One thing I like that I actually used for a while is the chat feature on my websites. On all of my websites I had a chat icon, and it said, "Live chat." And you've got to do is click on the "chat" icon, and then you get dinged and it comes up as an instant messaging thing. Then you can have a live chat with somebody, just like instant messaging. And you've probably seen this for reaching customer service on different retail websites. You can have this on your own website, too.

The service that I used is called PHP Chat. It was great. I decided to stop using it because, really, it requires being logged in and available. And my style of productivity is: I need to be able to focus. I need to be unavailable for long periods of time. And I don't want to respond to instant communications, and I don't have a large enough staff to handle that. So I decided to take it down, but it was a great experiment. It's another way to invite people to contact you. And it's very, very impressive if they can get you instantly, if you're in a position to do that.

So, strategy number three is: make it easy to schedule with you. In the past, when I had a Yellow Page ad, normally what people do when they call the Yellow Pages is they will call until they get an appointment. They'll pick out the first number to call. They'll dial. If they get somebody and can make an appointment, then that's it. If not, then they're onto the next number.

So, whatever you can do to make it easy to schedule with you, so they pretty much immediately get an appointment with you if they want, would be great. This might mean having an answering service. This is where an answering service really is worthwhile if, the kind of business you have, you get a lot of traffic by Yellow Page ads.

Now, referrals are different, because referrals are contacting you in particular. You're the go-to person. You're THE guy or gal. You're the one they want to work with and want the appointment with, when it's a referral. When it's from something else, like an advertisement in the newspaper or Yellow Pages or something else like that, then they don't have that relationship with you; they just want to make an appointment.

So, an answering service is a very, very useful tool, simply because you want the ability to make the appointment right away.

An answering service that just takes a message is OK, but it's kind of a waste because what you really want is the appointment. Most answering services that are worth their salt have scheduling capabilities. The operators, if you give them your schedule, they will actually be able to make an appointment for you with the person that calls. The beginning of the day, you fax them your availability. At the end of the day, they fax you your new appointments. So it's very easy.

Another way to go is online scheduling. And so, on your voicemail system, you can have: "To immediately schedule an appointment with me right now, go to schedulewithdavidsteele.com," and then that will forward to your online scheduling system.

There are a number of online scheduling systems. I've tried a few, and they didn't work out so well. I think the technology was still in its infancy a few years ago. It's gotten better, though. And there's one resource in the resource bank that I've looked at and tried, and it looks pretty good. So you can take a look at it here- http://www.appointmentquest.com/?pk=5010039955

Online scheduling is wonderful. If you use a computer anyway, you just plug in your appointments on the computer, then it's just easy to manage your own appointments and give other people permission to access your calendar and schedule their own appointment.

Wouldn't it be great if a client could cancel and reschedule their own appointment, rather than having to play telephone tag with them? Wouldn't it be great if a prospect could book their own initial consultation, rather than having to play telephone tag with them and possibly losing them? So, anything you can do to make it easy to schedule with you.

How about this? Office hours. So, if you have published office hours where you are available by telephone--say, Mondays and Friday, 2:00 to 4:00. And so, it's amazing how many people, they call on a Monday or a Friday. Mondays and Fridays are not great times for appointments, but oftentimes, people want to take care of their business on a Monday or a Friday by telephone.

And Friday, when I'm ready to hang it up for the weekend, I get a flurry of calls and emails that need following up. So, I had to follow them up over the weekend or on Monday. It's really interesting how people wait until the very, very end of the week to do that. So, it's not such a bad idea to have office hours on Mondays and Fridays, something like 2:00-4:00, and you publish this and people know that. All they got to do is call this number and they will get you right away. Or, they know that if they call this number and they don't get you, that you are available and you will get back to them right away because these are your office hours.

It's sort of like the University professors, you know, they teach their classes and they have their routines, but they are in their office during these days and these times and the students that they can come by and see them at that time. So, it's really nice for a prospect to know exactly when, where and how they can reach you.

So, strategy number three is make it easy to schedule with you. This could be office hours. It could be as a messaging. It could be online scheduling. It could be an answering service. It could be using your cell phone, whatever makes it easier for people to reach you so that they get that immediately gratification of, "Oh, boy! I got the appointment." They will feel better once they got the appointment. You know, there's this anxiety. There's this stress. They got this problem. They got this goal. They want to get some support and help for it and they get the appointment is a relief. They're already well on their way. It's a big deal for them. So, make it easy for them to get that appointment with you.

Strategy number four is your internal marketing system. This is everything you do for internal marketing. If we haven't talk about this before, there are two primary forms of marketing - internal marketing and external marketing. External marketing is communicating to people that don't know you. This is what you do when you give a presentation to a group or advertising. This is reaching audiences of people that don't even know you. That's external marketing. The primary outcome of external marketing is to create prospects, to bring people into your internal market.

Internal marketing is a process of building your relationship with people so that they come to know you, like you, trust you, hire you or buy from you or refer to you. Your internal system would include your newsletter - anything you send out to be in front of them on a regular basis; your events - things that you provide to your internal market and you can always use them for external marketing to attract people that don't even know you yet.

I conducted a monthly seminar series for years, and I sent out the announcements to my internal market and they showed up. Oftentimes, I get regulars that show up every time. They're like groupies, you know. It's wonderful, and they refer their friends. So, when other people find out about it that don't know me yet and then they join my internal market, that's using the seminar series as an attraction magnet, as a marketing device. So, it's part of my internal marketing system, which is to stay in touch with my internal market, continue to provide value to them, it would also bring in people from my external market as well. So events, following up by telephone and email and mailings. You have their contact information, so create a follow up system, and we'll talk more about that.

Then, there's an internal marketing system that we don't tend to use very much in private practice, but dentists use it a lot and it's called the recall. The recall is following up with somebody that you've worked with in the past or that you've actually connected with strongly. Like you had an initial consultation but they didn't actually hire you. This is part of internal marketing. These people are gold. Why not get back in touch with them? The dentist uses the recall to remind you that it's time for your cleaning. It's been a year. It's been six months. You can do the same thing. "Well, you know, it's been a year since we worked together and I'm just calling to follow up and check in on you. See how you're doing." The recall, wonderful part of the internal marketing system for following up.

Strategy number five is to get your prospects to engage you through incentives. The incentive can be a book or a CD or it can be a tangible product that they get. Like, "While supplies last, free copy of Conscious Dating during the month of December for everybody who contact us for a free initial consultation." So, it's an incentive, it's a reason to do something now instead of putting it off. "OK, well, gee, free consultation is great, but I get a book if I engage in free consultation?

Cool!" I know a lot of people that have no interest in timeshares but they go to a bed and breakfast and they listen to 90-minute presentation on time shares because of the incentive of staying the weekend at a bed and breakfast or a hotel or a resort area or something. So, the timeshare company uses this strategy heavily.

An incentive can be a free service. So, for example, you'll have a special and you'll have first month free when you sign up for three months. That's an incentive. Now, if they want and need your service anyway and it will stimulate them into action to give you a try and get going with you as opposed to waiting or working with somebody else. Then, it's all worth it. The incentive can be a discount and when using incentives, it's usually a good idea to include a deadline so they have to act by a certain date. If it's a tangible product, it's probably a good idea to have the words "while supplies last" and you want them to know that it's limited, and it probably is limited.

So, just think about the various ways that you might be able to use incentives, and you don't want to overuse them. But every once in a while, it's a good tool to bring out of your toolbox to get the people that are in your internal market into action. Get them going. Sometimes, they just need a reminder or a kick in the pants or a reason to act now, and an incentive can do that.

Strategy number six is how to get prospect to engage you is to stimulate word of mouth. Now, in our last module, module 5, we talked about how word of mouth referral is by far the most effective way that we get clients, and you don't have to passively wait by the telephone hoping it will happen. You can make it happen. You can build those relationships and you can stimulate word of mouth.

So, how do you stimulate it? You can stimulate it through events, through specials, through incentives, through premiums. So let's say you have your gem, which is a CD, it's a high value CD that provides a lot of great information for the people in your niche. You have it on your website. You give a stack of these CDs to your referral sources and, then, this stimulates word of mouth.

Let's say you title the CD to speak really very specifically to the deepest need or challenge of the people in your niche. So, if I am addressing stressed out real estate agents, and my CD is something like, "Stressing Out in Real Estate? Double your income and relax in 30 days" or something like that. And I pass this thing out everywhere I go and people pass it around.

Real estate agents, they talk to each other and they network heavily. They notice that their colleagues are struggling or stressed out. Isn't it nice that they have a CD to be able to give that colleague. So, your gem will stimulate word of mouth. There's another thing that you can do to stimulate word of mouth - providing a free service or a clinic.

So, if you're going to devote one day a year, for example, as basically pro bono day or clinic day and you market it, you advertise it, you let everybody know about it. "On this day, all my appointments are free. I'm not charging for anything. I got half hour slots and I got 20 of them and that will stimulate word of mouth. People will think of other people who can benefit from working with you and it makes them look good. It makes them a hero to be able to refer their friend, neighbor, coworker, to somebody like you, you're going to what you do, and here you are, you're providing this clinic day, no charge. It's kind of cool because they never had this before. They don't see anybody else doing it. So, any way you can differentiate yourself and put yourself out there in a way to get their attention, it goes without saying that it will stimulate word of mouth. "Hey, you know, there's this crazy ass practitioner that's working all day on Thursday for nothing, for free. All appointments are free. I've never heard of that before but, you know, hey, that's kind of cool. Why don’t you go check him out."

So, those are six strategies for how to get prospects to engage you- using a call to action that's effectively answers the four critical marketing questions. What is it all about? What's in there for me? Can I trust you? Do I feel good about this? Strategy two is providing choices for contacting you. This is the easiest one. This should be a no-brainer. You might have to add a few choices if you don't have it in place already like an 800 number or instant messaging. Three, make it easy to schedule with you and there's some creative strategies for doing that like having office hours or instant messaging or online scheduling or an answering service or even on your voicemail and having this very, very clear instructions, "If you would like an appointment for an initial consultation, I do this on Fridays between the hours of 12 and 4. Please, leave a message with your preferred availability and I'll call you right back." Boom! You just made it easy to schedule.

Strategy four - internal marketing system - your newsletter, your events, your following up by telephone, email, mailings and recalls. Strategy five - using incentives like books and CDs and free service, discounts, anything that will stimulate your internal network into action because they've been interested and attracted but they haven't actually taken action yet. Give them a deadline, tell them while supplies last. Strategy six, stimulating word of mouth. Many creative ways to do that.

And naturally, the fun part, I love being creative, and hopefully, you do, too. It gets you better results because people do need to see that you're special and that you're different. Plain vanilla in the same way as everybody else is not going to get as good a result as when you take a risk and you try something new. So, those are some strategies for getting prospects to engage you.

Woman: One part I liked that really started giving me some ideas and I haven't really formulated them yet is the recall. When I get enough clients where I can actually say, "I've got a lot of prior clients." It's a really nice touch just to call them up and say, "How's your love life? Give me some good stuff. I want to hear what's going on for you."

David: Yes, absolutely.

Woman: Then they say, "Well, it didn't really work out." Then you can follow-up by saying, "How can I help you?"

David: Absolutely. I've heard it over and over again where people have made a recall and have heard from the person they called, "I'm so glad you called! I was thinking about you!"

Woman: Yes. It's funny how that works, isn't it?

David: Yes. I'd also do it with prospects--they're not necessarily former clients but, you have talked with them in the past. You had a good connection. You had a good conversation. They haven't hired you though.

Woman: The people that we had had complimentary sessions with call them up--because I always forget about them--and say, "How are you doing now? I've just been thinking about you." I always keep little notes and just say, "How's your mom doing?"

David: Absolutely.

Woman: Good way to connect.

David: Don't forget those people that you've had lunch with while you're at a conference, people like that, anybody that just made a really good connection with. You know, getting back in touch with them is a way of maintaining and building a relationship anyway. It's also the best way to get something going for your practice because that might stimulate them to hire you or refer to you or just be a closer connection for you. It's never a waste of time to follow up. Never. It's always a waste if you create a connection or you put out some marketing effort and don't follow it up.

All right, on page four of your Study Guide, let's talk about how to conduct an effective enrollment conversation. I want you to download the enrollment conversation checklist and the link is there in your Study Guide. It's also in the Private Practice Marketing Secrets home pages.

The enrollment conversation. The bluebirds practically enroll themselves, they beg you to work with them pretty much. All the rest of your clients you'll get by having an enrollment conversation. It doesn't mean that they're going to be hard to convert into clients. It just means that you have to do some talking first before the decision to hire you and move forward.

So, what do you do during this talk? And when you conduct an initial consultation, what do you do? If you market free initial consultations, what do you do during that time? The enrollment conversation checklist answers the question of exactly what you do between the time that you make a connection with the prospective client and they hire you, or when you actually do promote a free initial consultation.

I do not do free initial consultations, by the way. I don't give away my services. I don't advertise that I do. But the people who want to work with me, we're going to have a chat. We're going to have a phone call or a meeting to determine if there's a fit and I'm not going to charge for that chat. Well, guess what? That chat is the free initial consultation. Just personally, I don't like putting it out the form that I conduct a free service. I already give away lots for free. I don't want to give away my services for free, my time, my personal time. I'll do free seminars, I'll have free e-programs and audio programs for you. I'll have free newsletters. I have lots of free stuff for you. I will not just give away my time to you, individually one-on-one. No way. However, if you are interested in working with me, I'm not going to expect you pay to talk about the possibility. So, we'll have a chat! So, that's just my own personal take on it. That's how I personally practice it.

Many people use the free initial consultation. Many coach training schools promote it as the primary marketing device. I understand why they do it, which is try before you buy. There are no ready-made coaching clients, so you have to give people an experience of working with you in order to convince them of the value. That makes sense. I have no problem with it if you do it, but you don't have to do it. In fact, my preference is, instead of providing a free initial consultation, to provide a complimentary service.

An example of that would be like an assessment. So, for your relationship coaching for singles, your complimentary service might be our relationship readiness assessment. Are you ready for your next relationship? Free relationship readiness assessment. Save your next relationship before it starts. The Chiropractor does this by giving you a free exam. That's an example of a complimentary service.

So, what's happening is two things actually. Number one is there's something that you would have to do anyway with your clients like an assessment and it's time limited. It's only a half an hour or 15 minutes. It's not ongoing. The thing about a service like coaching, counseling, therapy, it's ongoing. You don't want to provide them an initial session in which potentially, they can feel like they've got their questions answered and their needs met, thank you very much. Or "Well, now that I tried it, I decided I'm not impressed." So, don't provide them a complimentary service that's part of an ongoing thing that you want them to pay for, provide them a complimentary service that has a beginning and an end that can be delivered in 15-20 minutes like an assessment. That's just my bias about that.

So, when you enter the conversation, the possibility of working together. Let's say somebody contacts you because they've been referred to you. Let's say you've had a promotion for people in your newsletter - one day only during the month of December, free initial consultations for half hour slots. So, you're actually talking with a real life prospect.

There are 11 things that I want you do and pay attention to. So, let's go down to the enrollment conversation checklist. The first thing that I'd like you to do is to ask them what led them to contact you at this point? Very, very simple. Very obvious. It's so obvious it's easy to forget and ignore. Make sure you know why they're contacting you. What motivated them to take action at this point in time in their life. They might have lived with this problem for weeks, months and years. Why now? Why are they contacting you now? This is very, very important information so that you can guide the enrollment conversation so that you can address the reason, the motivation they have for wanting to consider working with you. That's item number one.

Item number two - ask about their previous experience with people like you. Have you ever worked with a relationship coach before? Have you ever worked with a chiropractor before? Have you seen an attorney before? Whatever it is that you do, ask them, "Have you ever done this before?" People that have not done it before might need a little orientation. They might not know things that you take for granted. So, you might need to explain. "Well, here's what a coach is. Here's how it's different from therapy." These are very, very simple basic things. However, if they have seen a professional like you before, you need a little more information about that because that tells you everything about how you can do a good job with them and what you might need to avoid.

For example, as a couples therapist I got a lot of couples that have seen other couple therapists, and then they come to me, and it's nice to know that they're coming out of a bad experience. Oftentimes they'll tell me that, "Yes, we saw this couple therapist and she said that our relationship is unhealthy and we shouldn't be together. We should get a divorce." So, it's good for me to know that information. So I know what their needs are and where they're coming from. So, item two is ask about their previous experience with people like you or your service. Have you ever seen a therapist before?

Item three, make sure that you focus on connecting with them, on establishing and building a relationship with them and not so much on your agenda. Remember, it's about them. It's not about your judgment. It's not about you wanting to get a client or you wanting to make money or you paying your bills. It's about the connection and the relationship with them. Sometimes we need a reminder about this. You know, after you see prospect after prospect and client after client, they all start to look and feel the same. Each one are individuals and you need to focus on connecting with each one individually, on the relationship, and we need to focus less on our own agenda especially in the enrollment process because your prospects will pick that up.

Item four, ask questions and listen the majority of the time. I've seen lots of very chatty private practice professionals. In fact, I was just in somebody's office last week. He was so chatty that I couldn't barely get a word in edgewise. I had to interrupt him! I'm the client here. I had to interrupt them to be heard. So, you ask questions and listen the majority of the time. You want to collect information, you want them talking. They need to do the majority of the talking, you need to do the majority of the question asking.

Item five, reflect back the goals, needs and challenges that you are hearing from them. Now, this might seem very simple, but very few practitioners do it. They take in as an information, they might make notes on a legal pad. But you need to reflect it back so that the prospect hears it. It gets reflected back to them. They experience it again. So, your prospect might say that, "Yes, I'm having a really hard time on my job." So, you reflect back to them at some point and say, "OK, and I hear you saying that you're having a really hard time on your job." The prospect takes that in and say, "Yes, I am having a really hard time on my job." It's just reinforces why they're there. It gets them in touch with their pain. It gets them in touch with their goal and their reason for working with you. So, it's a very, very effective, very subtle strategy. Very simple, just reflect back the goals, needs and challenges that you're hearing from them. It'll get them in touch with their pain and further motivate them to work with you.

Item number six is tell a selected story about yourself or a client that helps them know that you understand and relate and gives them hope. This does not mean go into story-telling mode. This means after you've collected enough information to know about who they are, why they're there, what their history is – you’ve got the lay of the land. Go ahead and pick a scenario, a vignette, a story, a client that you worked with, a situation in your own life. It can be something that a colleague had told you - something that gives them hope. Some story that lets them know that you relate, that you understand them.

Going into story-telling mode means that you tell story after story and it doesn't stop. Or the story that you do tell goes on for 5, 10, 15 minutes or more. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about just telling them a short story that lets them know, 'Yeah, brother. I hear you. And here's a similar situation to somebody like you - here's the result that they got.'

So it helps them feel heard and validated and understood - and it gives them hope. Gives them hope that your service can work for them and gives them hope that you really understand them, you really get them, based on the story that you pick to share with them.

We all have stories, even if we don't have a long time in our own practice, we have stories that we've read in our textbooks. We have stories that our colleagues or professors have told us. We've had our own experiences as a client, and we all need to be validated. We all need to know that we're not the only one in the world that feels this way or has this problem.

So a well-selected story can do that; can validate and give the person hope and let them know they're not the only one in the world and yes, this can help you because it helped this other person just like you.

Item number seven is: provide a gem or two of valuable information or feedback or a suggestion to demonstrate your value or credibility. Now, you don't want to give away the store. You don't want to solve their problem in one session - especially if you're not getting paid for it. But chances are, based on their situation and what they're telling you, you've got lots and lots of ideas, lots of information that you'd like to share with them that can be helpful to them.

And so pick one or two and share it with them. It gives them a taste. It's like going to the grocery store and getting a sample of a product. It's just a taste. It makes them hungry for more. You don't want to give them the biggest answer to their biggest question. That doesn't make them hungry for more, that makes them satiated. But give them a gem or two; valuable information, feedback, or a suggestion that will demonstrate your value and your credibility. A small one, but a valuable one.

So you're on audition here. And part of the audition is you're going to show them your stuff.

Here is a great one. I've never seen this anywhere else before. I don't know why more people don't do it. But item number eight is: ask what they are seeking, want and need in a helping professional. They are the customer, they are the client, they are the one that's going to be paying the money, receiving the service and wanting the benefit from the service. Ask what they are seeking, want and need in working with you.

What kind of therapist do you want? What kind of chiropractor do you want? What kind of chiropractic working relationship would work best for you? Now, they might not know, but have a conversation about that.

So if you're chiropractor you might say, "Well, normally I see my patients once a week for a maintenance basis. If we're starting out and you're really in pain and having a hard time, oftentimes we'll be meeting two or three times a week at first. And each one of my sessions is generally around 15 minutes."

And this person might say, "Well, you know what? I work 12 hours a day, I have five kids, I have very little time." Coming to your office that often would be really a burden on me. It would work much better if I could get a babysitter and come in to work with you for two hours once a week, if possible.

What is it they're looking for? Chances are they have preconceived notions about what they want. Wouldn't it be good for you to know that, to know what it is so you can speak to that. Even if it’s to say, 'Well, sorry - I don't work that way. Can't do it. But I can refer you to somebody I know that does.'

So ask what they're seeking, want, in working with you or a helping professional like you. What kind of coach do you want? There are different kinds of coaches and chances are you can modify your approach to fit what this person wants.

As much as I have very little patience for story-telling, I have one client that pretty much needs to tell his stories. We spend about half of each session every week with me just listening to his stories. I'm real clear that I've modified my usual coaching approach for him, because that is the style of coaching that he really wants and needs. Once he's able to just tell the stories about what happens during the week, the good, the bad, and the ugly - once he's got it out, then he's available for coaching. He just needs to do it.

So sometimes you can modify your own service, your own style to suit the client's preference. But you won't know what it is they prefer if you don't ask. Sometimes they won't hire you, or they'll stop working with you because it's not in the way that they prefer. But they won't tell you that.

Item number nine: Find something about them to be genuinely excited about. I call this 'positive mirroring.' So when you think about working with them, what excites you? Is there something about them or what they're up to that really rings your chimes? Say, 'Wow! I really want to work with this person! I could be really excited about helping them in this way or with this goal.' What is it? And then share that with them. I call it 'positive mirroring;' you're mirroring back positively. People love positive mirroring - they love to be seen in a positive light, in the way that they want to see themselves.

If you cannot come up with something to be genuinely excited about, in fact, you're talking to this person and you say you don't want to work with him at all! You can't get excited about anything! Chances are you should refer them on.

If it's somebody that you want to work with you can find something to get genuinely excited about and go ahead and positively mirror that. Share it with them. 'You know what? I'm really impressed with X, Y and Z! I'd really like to work with you and help you accomplish this. It just is really exciting to me! This is really special! I don't get this every day! This is one of my favorite things to work with! You know, I've been there, done that - and this is what excites me the most! I'm just so impressed with your ability to A, B and C!'

Whatever you like, whatever you appreciate, whatever impresses you - go ahead and share that.

Item number 10 of the enrollment conversation checklist is the four closing questions. We're going to go over those in a minute.

Item number 11 is to plan and use strategies for countering objections. You will get objections, except from the bluebirds. But chances are you don't have to do much of any of this for the bluebirds. But the boulders! The boulders require a little bit of effort, a little bit of pushing, pulling and coaxing because of fear and inertia.

Why fear? What are they afraid of? You have dedicated your life to helping people. Well, to you you're not scary, but to your prospective clients they are terrified of you! They feel extremely vulnerable. They have to do things, they have to talk about things that they are not necessarily comfortable with. People avoid discomfort, right? And this is so clear from their side of the fence but oftentimes because we're looking through our own eyes and our own experience, we don't realize this.

So assume that most of your prospects are terrified of you - they are scared. At the same time that they are attracted and interested in working with you and want the benefit of working with you, they are scared. Scared of what? Scared of you, scared of being vulnerable with you, scared that maybe this won't work for them, maybe you will rip them off. Maybe they're the one in a million who's doomed to fail and be miserable for the rest of their lives. Who knows what they're scared of? Just realize that they have an awful lot of fear holding them back.

Then there's inertia. Inertia is huge. There's a principle of physics that momentum and inertia - an object in motion will tend to stay in motion, an object at rest will tend to stay at rest. So if they've gone this long without working with somebody like you or without addressing this problem effectively, the more comfortable thing to do for them is just continue that way. That's inertia.

So they have to actually overcome inertia; get in action, get over the hump - you know, make the decision, take the action to work with you. That's huge!

And so if you understand this then you realize how huge it is and you can be their cheering section. You can be the evangelist for getting into action, realizing how wonderful and how exceptional and what a big deal it is for people. You don't take it for granted.

So fear and inertia are huge. They are the reasons that hold boulders back. All the objections they come up with are really based on fear and inertia. It is almost never about what they're saying. "Oh, gee - I have to think about it," or "I have to ask my wife," or "I'm not sure I can afford it right now." It's always about fear and inertia.

If they were absolutely, positively, excited and sure that this would work for them and were guaranteed they'd get the benefits for them, they would just jump on it! They're not jumping on it because of fear and inertia.

So we need to identify the possible objections that we're going to get. Oftentimes it's easy because you've heard them before. And we need to plan strategies for countering them so we can use them. And I have the biggest objection - the number one objection - and my number one strategy for countering that objection coming up a little later.

Those are the 11 items on how to conduct an effective enrollment conversation. So with the enrollment conversation checklist, I would encourage you to print it out, have it in front of you when you're talking on the phone with somebody.

When you are talking with somebody in person, I do not expect you to have this in front of you. I do want you to go back over it after you've had the conversation, though. OK, did I ask about what led them to contact me? Did I ask about their previous experience with same or similar professionals like me? Go ahead and use it as your after-the-fact self-evaluation checklist. It'll help you remember what you need to focus on and do it better next time. That's the enrollment conversation checklist and that's essentially how to conduct an effective enrollment conversation is to do this 11 things.

Woman: I love this checklist. I mean, this gives me great ideas for, you know, how to go about doing that. Is this the order in which you bring these things up or does it just depends on the client?

David: It's pretty much the order, yes. It depends upon the flow of the conversation, of course, but I put them in the approximate order that you'll tend to come up with most of the time.

Woman: Well, if you do this enrollment conversation, that's a great sample session. I mean, they're going to get a really good idea of who they are, but they're going to get a good idea of who you are.

David: Absolutely, and it focuses this sample session in a way that increases, like you said, they're going to hire you. That's the key. That's what you want to have happen from the initial consultation or sample session. Yes, absolutely.

Page six of your Study Guide, section three - what not to talk about during the enrollment conversation. Never, ever, ever talk about your problems. It's very common when you're talking with somebody and they share about their problems and challenges that you have your own problems and challenges, so you validate them and you just lean back and you share some of yours as a way of joining. Now, you know, you can say things like, "Boy, I really relate" or "I've really been there." But, don't tell stories about your problems. No. That takes the focus off of them. You want to focus on them. You don't want to take the focus off of them. Do not talk about your problems no matter how tempting it might be, even as a joining buddy-buddy kind of conversation. This is a professional conversation.

Secondly, do not talk about your personal situation in any way especially if it's unrelated to working together. This includes your problems, but this can include your wife, your kids, the car you drive, what you're doing during your hobbies and spare time.

Remember, the focus needs to stay on them. Do not ask personal questions that are unrelated to working together. They're coming to you for this, let's say you're an accountant and it’s about their money and you find out that they just bought a boat, you're really interested about that and you want to ask them, "What kind of boat? Where do you keep it? What do you do with it?" Well, maybe you can have that kind of conversation once you’ve gotten to know them, but they haven't even hired you yet. Stay focused on the enrollment conversation. Do not ask personal questions that are unrelated to working together. Do not talk about your personal situation, in any way, that's unrelated to working together.

Thirdly, what you charge the money or the features of your service before the connection is made. Never talk about money. Never talk about how your service works before the connection is made. Many times, I've been in my office, I get a call from the Yellow Pages and the first question they have is how much do you charge? I didn't know the stuff. I didn't know any better. I would just launch into starting to address the question. They will say, "Thank you very much" and hang up. Now I know that we’ve got to make the connection first. If they ask you a question that goes into an area that's not a good idea to talk about yet, then redirect them to the reason that they're calling.

So, keep them focused on the important topic at hand and tell them that, "We'll talk about that next." Money especially, money needs to be brought up when they're ready to consider seriously the idea of working with you. That's after they've already made the connection and already convinced that you're the one that can help them towards the tail end of the enrollment conversation. You never talk about money or the features of your service before the connection is made. Always make the connection first.

Fourth, small talk unrelated to the context of your services after the first few minutes. Again, things that are not related to working together. They are not in the professional realm or the professional relationship that you're going to have with them, don't go there. In the beginning, you might talk about the weather and the traffic getting there but, after the first minute or two, you need to get down to business and keep your focus on them. Forget the small talk. Some people like small talk because it's fun, others gravitate to it because they're uncomfortable or they are awkward and that's how they handle it. Just use the enrollment conversation checklist, do those activities and you notice that small talk is not in there.

Item five is do not swap stories. This is similar to item one of don't talk about your problem. Do not swap stories. So, your prospective client tells you a story, don't go ahead and share your own related similar story. You can say something like, "Oh, boy, I've been there." But don't waste this person's time with you gratifying yourself by telling your own story. Keep the focus on them.

Lastly, item number six, is do not talk about other people at all unless it's directly relevant to the context of your services. You keep the focus in the room between the two of you, the conversation you're having and you keep the focus on them. You do not talk about other people. This is gossip. It's really rare that it's directly relevant to the context of the services.

So those are six items not to talk about during enrollment conversation - your problems, personal questions unrelated to working together, money or features of your service before the connection is made, small talk unrelated to the context of your services after the first few minutes, swapping stories and other people. It should be easy. It is amazing how often private practice professionals get caught up in one of these traps. They're having a good time, they're talking. We need to focus our talk and be professional.

On page six of the Study Guide, section four, let's talk about the four closing questions. Now, towards the end of the enrollment conversation - and by the way, in the enrollment conversation, you are in charge of the time, you are in charge of how long it takes, and I would suggest no more than a half an hour. You can even go shorter than that. You don't want to go longer because.. why? You know, you're taking up more of your time, you're at risk of giving away more of your services, you want to give them a taste, you want to have a focused conversation on the possibility of working together. So, why would you go more? And, you are in charge of the time. When it's time to segue the conversation from the earlier items in the enrollment conversation checklist, the segue question is, "Has this been helpful to you?"

So, look at the checklist. You have been talking about the reason that they contacted you, their previous experience with professionals. You've been focusing on connecting with them on the relationship. You've kept focus on them. You asked questions. You listened the majority of the time. You reflected back their goals, needs, and challenges. You told a carefully selected story about yourself to a client that helped them really know that you understand and relate and give them hope. You provided a gem or two of valuable information feedback or a suggestion that demonstrated your value and credibility. You asked to what they're seeking in a professional like you and in the service that you have. You've found something to be genuinely excited about in the possibility of working with them and something you can really appreciate about them and how they show up.

Now, you're asking, "Has this been helpful to you?" Almost always, it's going to be a positive response. "Yes, it has. Thank you very much." You want to time this so that if you're tightly scheduled and you only have half an hour and you want to time this so that you allow at least five minute, preferably ten minutes for the closing process.

So, you're going to ask your segue question about 20 minutes into the enrollment conversation. "So, has this been helpful to you?" What this does is it causes the prospect to reflect on their experience of you in the past 20 minutes. "Hmm, has this been helpful? What has my experience of this person been like? Yes, it's been pretty positive. I would say yes." So, it gives them a positive feeling and mindset towards working with you - very simple, very powerful. "Has this been helpful to you?"

I find myself, when I'm conducting workshops and seminars, I found that this question is useful when I'm answering questions. People have questions and from their perspective, I want to know that my answer has been helpful. We've been on target. We've been on what they need. So, I will ask, "Was that helpful?" And, the information I get is very important because it's either "Yes, you've been wonderful, thank you very much." Or, "Well, yes, partly, but I also need to know more about X." That's a great very respectful honoring question. "Has this been helpful to you?"

Closing question number two, "Would you like to continue this conversation some time?" So, you've given them the taste. It's been 20 minutes, half an hour conversation. "Would you like to continue this conversation some time?" Open-ended, you know, you're not trying to back them into a corner, pin them down or anything. You're just asking about their intention, the idea of working together or continuing to talk. It's a very casual, very natural question. You're not putting them on the spot, you're not asking them for a commitment. Simply asking, "Do you like the idea of getting together or working together?" The response that you get, it’s going to be varied, it doesn't really matter what it is" - it's the desired response that they go inside and they get in touch with their experience of you, their desire to solve the problem, their perception that you can help them with their problem and the idea that working with you might be a good idea. So, don't worry about the answers you get. What's more important is the response, what's going on inside the prospect.

Closing question number three, this is actually a trick question. "When would be good for you?" so, the response to closing question number two, "Would you like to continue this conversation some time?" is often time some sort of vague affirmative response." "Yes, sure, I wouldn't mind that."

And then you ask, "When would be good for you?"

Well, I call it a trick question because we don't really expect the prospect to be getting their calendar out and booking an appointment right then and there. That would be a bluebird thing to do. It's wonderful when it happens.

Oftentimes this question has the effect of bringing out what is it that they need to know in order to make the decision to hire you. We could just ask that. You could say, “Well, what else do you need to know to make the decision to hire me?" But that it doesn't look as good, it's not as elegant. It's too blatant in your face confrontive. "Well, will you hire me now? What do you need to know? What do you need to do to be ready to hire me? Huh, huh, huh?"

So, it's a very natural, gentle, casual follow-up to, "Would you like to continue this conversation sometime."

"Uh, I don't know, yeah sure."

"Well, when would be good for you?"

You're innocent here, but they go inside and they come up with anything they need to know before they can make the decision to hire you. They might say something like, "Uh, well wait a minute. Wait a minute. How much do you charge? How does this work?"

And at this point, when they ask the question about money, is the time to answer it. Not before, but when you reach this point because by this time you know that they are ready to make the decision. You've made the connection. They have the information about who you are, how you show up, and you've gotten information about them. You have a relationship now. So, they are ready to talk about money if they bring it up at this point.

So, when will be good for you? Whatever questions, whatever objections come up: "Now wait a minute, how much is this? How does it work? What's your availability?" Whatever comes up is what they need to know in order to make the decision to hire you.

And I think of it as a game. The game is to wait for them to bring it up after the connection. I mean I could easily just lay it out there and say "OK, well if you want to work together. You know, I charge by the month. I charge this much. We meet weekly for this amount of time. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Would you like to do that?"

But the game is to have them ask, "So how does this work?" And then I know they are really, really ready to hear it and they are seriously considering working with me.

Bringing up anything that they are not ready to hear too early causes resistance. Bringing up money too early causes resistance. Bringing up the time commitment to early causes resistance.

When they ask about it, it is not too early. It is the right time, especially after you've established the connection in the relationship.

Closing question number four, "Do you know anyone else that can benefit from what I do?" This is asking for the referral.

When do you ask for the referral? When you've been helpful to somebody. When you've had a great session with a client and when you are meeting with a prospective client and you've been helpful to them and they're positively inclined towards you is a great time to ask for the referral.

Now, there's another side benefit to asking for the referral during the enrollment conversation. And here it is. Think about this and write it down. If the prospect is willing to refer to you, they are also more inclined to hire you. Please write it down, it's important. If a prospect is inclined to refer to you, they are much more inclined to hire you.

So, when you ask them this question, "Hmm I wonder, do you know anyone else that can benefit from what I do?" And they go inside, not only are they possibly thinking of people that might benefit from working with you, but they are thinking about their experience of you, whether they feel good about referring you to their friends.

So, it helps them feel good about you and be more inclined to hire you because if they would refer to you then they must feel good enough about you to hire you for themselves. It just reinforces the decision about how smart and wise they are to consider working with you. It helps to make the decision to hire you, if they haven't made it at this point anyways.

Now, the idea of these four closing question is not that you absolutely got to do it this way. The primary idea of closing questions is to have a structure, to have a semi script that you can follow that segues the conversation during the enrollment conversation from talking about them and their situation to the possibility of hiring you.

So, it can be any structure, it can be any questions. This is just what I've come up with. So, I invite you to try it out. I invite you to modify them anyway you want. The desired effect is that it segues the conversation and then you talk about working together and they may actually hire you. Those are my four closing questions.

Woman: On closing question number 2, when you're talking about, "Would you like to continue this conversation some time?" Is that a free follow-up? I mean if I actually make an appointment, "Say yeah, Thursday at 10:00. I'd really like to continue this." Is it still that information gathering, connection making call?

David: [laughs] Great question and it's natural to wonder that. And I tend to trust people that they know this is a professional service and that you charge. And if they make that appointment and show up, they know that they're paying for it.

And what's important here is that they, for question number 2, "Would you like to continue the conversation sometime?" at this point what's important is that they just get in touch with the fact that they like the idea of working with you and continue the conversation.

Woman: OK. I find question number two misleading so I'm wondering if I can rework it a little bit, like, "Would you work with me? Do you feel like this is a match?" You know and putting it more on that professional level. "Look we can chat again, but the next time you're paying for it?"

David: Well, you see--and you can try that. What I've found is that people need to be eased into it. And it's a more gradual process if they consider the idea of working with you first before they get down to the brass tacks.

So pinning them down, "Would you like to work together? Do you think this is a good fit?" It's too soon. They haven't even thought about that and yet they're expected to come up with an answer. So, the way to get them to think about it is to ask the question, "Would you like to continue this conversation sometime?" or something else. I mean you could ask the question, "Well, do you like the idea of us working together?"

Woman: I like that one.

David: I mean, you know, that might work. [laughs]

Woman: OK, I just didn't want to mislead them and when you first said it I immediately wrote down, "Is that for free?"

David: [laughs]

Woman: Because that's where I was heading.

David: Well yeah, at this point it's just the idea. And the next question is actually getting down to brass tacks, you know, "When would be good for you?"

It's rare. It's very exceptional that somebody actually gets out their calendar and says, "Next Thursday at 3." And then you make that appointment and go on your way without actually having talked about money or anything. Well, in the rare exception that that actually happens, OK, no problem. Make the appointment, keep the appointment, and then bring out your contract, your disclosure agreement, that you want them to read and sign about working together.

If they made the follow-up appointment and they come back and see you whether it's in person or over the telephone, they're taking this very, very seriously. They're taking time out of their day. They're committed. And they might have avoided the brass tacks conversation, but at that time would be the time to get down to brass tacks.

And if they are not ready to talk about it and remember my game? I said it's kind of a game with me for them to bring it up. If they're not ready to talk about it, if they make a follow-up appointment with me without even talking about money, you know, I know that they don't want to talk about money. They're not ready to talk about money. They're scared of talking about money.

So, certainly when they get back together, they demonstrated committed behavior. This is our second time meeting. You must really want to work together. Well, here's how it works. Here's how much it costs. Would you like to put that on your credit card right now?

Does that make sense?

Woman: Yes, that helps. Thank you.

David: OK. Great question. Thank you very much.

Woman: I think I would have a little problem with number four, you know, in the first time that I had visited with someone, I feel like I was asking them for more business before they had really even hired me.

David: And what's the problem?

Woman: Well, [laughs] I don't know. I don't know.

David: Well, do you think it would interfere with them hiring you?

Woman: You know when I think about some people, I would think that they would be thinking to themselves, "well gee I haven't even decided I want to work with her, why would she want someone else's name already.

David: [laughs] So you see, here's my reasoning...

Woman Caller 2: OK, that's what I want to hear.

David: OK, if they haven't actually made the decision, which means they're boulder and they have objections, they have inertia, they have all this stuff going on, they haven't said yes yet. Then you go ahead and you ask them that question.

What it does is it get's them thinking. Number one, "Well who do I know that might benefit from this service." Also it gets them thinking about, "Do I want to refer this person? Do I trust them enough? Do I think they're good enough to refer to my friends?"

So, it's another way to get them to evaluate you and the possibility of working with you. And it's very subtle. It's very elegant. It's like asking a follow-up question, but you can't ask, "Well are you ready to work with me? Or you haven't said anything about working with me. You haven't made the decision yet. What do you need to know to make the decision? You know, and these are all like "go for the jugular" kinds of questions that make people uncomfortable. And we're generally uncomfortable asking.

So, this is just a gentle way to get them thinking about how valuable your service is, how good a practitioner they experience you to be. You must be pretty good if they would refer you to a friend. And it reinforces that they might even work with you themselves.

Woman Caller 2: OK.

David: It's sort of backwards I know, but that's the reasoning.

Woman Caller 2: Are you just wanting them to say, "Yes, I might know someone?" Or are you expecting them to give you a name and what are you going to do with it if they do?

David: In terms of referrals, making referrals, asking for referrals, you need to always be prepared with how the referral can be made. And one of my favorite ways to do that is to have a referral packet. Have an envelope with an introductory letter, some information about your services, whatever it is that you want to be in front of a referral. Put a coupon or a certificate in there, a call to action, an offer, testimonials, whatever you can put in there that will increase the likelihood that, if they receive this and they need your service, they would do something about it.

So, assemble this referral packet, make a bunch of them, and have them ready all the time. And so, if somebody says, "Oh, yeah, I have somebody in mind," you don't necessarily want their name and number. You're not going to call them out of the cold. But you can give them the referral packet and say, "Would you be willing to give them this?"

Woman: Oh, OK. I can do that. I just didn't know if we were doing this enrollment procedure over the phone, where I would be going with asking for a referral...

David: What I hear you asking is: "Well, what do I do with their response?"

Woman: [laughs] Yes. OK.

David: And so, there's a number of different responses. One would be: "Well, no, I can't think of anybody," or "Yes, I can think of somebody." But really, the most desired response--the whole reason for asking the question, in my mind--is to get them thinking about would they even want to refer you, which gets them thinking about their experience of you and makes them positively inclined to hire you.

Remember what I asked you to write down before? I asked you to write down something to the effect of: "If they are positively inclined to refer to you, it makes them more inclined to hire you." So, if they haven't actually made that decision yet, when you ask this question, it just nudges them further in that direction. Does that make sense?

Woman: Mm-hmm. It does. And there's a lot of setup before you get to that question. It's not just asking the first question: "Hey, you know anybody else?"

David: [laughs]

Woman: OK.

David: Right. There is a lot of setup. And it's the last question you ask in the whole enrollment conversation.

Woman: OK.

David: And if they haven't actually decided to hire you at this point, when you ask this question, it's just another nudge in that direction. And if you get a referral out of it, wonderful. You devoted time one-on-one with this person. You provided value to them. That's the best time to ask for the referral. Go ahead. And make sure you're ready for how the referral can happen.

Woman: Yeah. I get it. The real objective is to get them to thinking about hiring you themselves.

David: Yeah, yeah.

Woman: OK.

David: That's the primary objective.

Secondary objective: if you get a referral out of it, wonderful. There's no harm in asking at this point because you always want to ask when somebody's had a positive experience of you. This could be at a workshop or seminar. You've had a workshop or seminar, and then, at some point, wouldn't it be good to ask for the referral? "Hey, if you've enjoyed this workshop or this seminar, can you think of anybody else that would enjoy it as well, that can benefit from it? Please send them to www.greatrelationships.com." Ask for the referral.

Let's talk about overcoming objections. Now, we've already talked about the two primary things getting in the way of boulders is fear and inertia. And they are going to come up with things like, "Well, gee, I'd like to. I just can't afford it right now," or "Well, I have to think about it," or "I've got to talk to my wife." And sometimes it's a little disconcerting because they looked all hot to trot, you spent a lot of time with them, and now they're backing off? What's up with that? Well, it's fear and inertia. [laughs] They're boulders. That's what's up with that.

And, in my opinion, it is almost never about what they're saying the objection is. It's never about time. It's never about money. It's never about needing to think about it. It's about fear and inertia. So we need to be able to help them overcome their fear and inertia.

I take an evangelistic perspective in this, meaning: I want to save their soul. They've been living with this challenge, this problem, for a while. And it took them a long time and a lot of courage, bravery, overcoming a lot of inertia, just to get to this point to where they contacted me. It's huge! And I don't want it to go to waste.

And my belief is, if they don't follow through and hire me, then it will go to waste. It'll get back on the shelf for more years. They will let inertia win. I don't want inertia to win; I want to help them be successful. So I want to help them overcome their fear and inertia. I want to counter the objections. I want to apply some influence. And, chances are, they need me to apply some influence because of their fear and inertia.

So, think about it. If they're a boulder--which means they are interested, they are attracted, but they're holding back, most likely because of fear and inertia--they need to work with you. They want to work with you. They're holding back. Do they need you to be gentle and respectful and say, "OK. Well, if you're not ready, that's OK. Give me a call when you are"? Or do they need you to kick their butt so that they don't let fear and inertia rule, and they live with the problem and it goes back on the shelf, and nothing changes for them?

So you need to decide the position that you will take. Are you going to be passive? Are you going to let fear and inertia rule? Are you just going to say, "OK. Well, let me know when you're ready. I'm here"? Are you going to interpret their behavior as resistant or not ready, or are you going to interpret their behavior as: they're afraid? And it's understandable inertia. It's human nature. Are you going to take the position that you need to do something about it?

So, we're going to talk about some strategies, and the caveat to these strategies is it applies to boulders when they are interested and attracted, but they are holding back out of fear and inertia. They're not acting. They're not making a decision. They certainly appear interested and attracted.

It does NOT apply to people that are not interested. Chances are, I don't really need to tell you this, but it bears just saying it once: you do not pursue any prospects that are not interested in working with you. If they say, "No thanks," or "Not interested," OK. That's clear. That's obvious. I don't know many practitioners that do chase down people [laughs] that are not interested in working with them.

But the strategies that we're going to talk about next apply only to people that are interested and attracted, but they appear to be holding back from making a decision. It's hard for them to make the decision. They come up with objections like: "Well, gee, I'm not sure I can afford it right now," or "Let me think about it," or "I've got to talk to my wife," or things like that.

So, on page nine of your Study Guide, section five, here's strategies for asserting influence--actually being an evangelist in helping them overcome their fear and inertia. So, first one is: redirect the focus. When they bring up a question or a statement that's likely to hinder closing, get in the way of the decision to hire you, redirect them to focus on the goals and the needs that they have and the benefits of working with you.

So, for example, if they bring up a question like, "Well, where did you go to school? Where did you get training?" well, do they really need to know that? Is that going to help or hinder closing? Chances are, it's fear and inertia speaking, and that if you talk about where you went to school, you're not going to be any closer to having them hire you.

And even things like, "Well, what's your success rate? Do you provide a guarantee?" Chances are, if they were absolutely confident that this would work for them, they would be hiring you, and that talking about whether or not you had a guarantee and what's your success rate wouldn't necessarily bring them any closer. So you have to listen. You have to use your judgment.

Is this going to help or hinder our conversation? Do they really need to know this, or is this fear and inertia talking? If it's their inertia talking, then you can redirect the focus onto the reason that they're there: their goals, their needs, their challenges, and the benefits of working with you.

So he'd say, "Well, where did you get your training?" Say, "Well, if you're interested in where I got my training, we can talk about that. Please tell me more about why you're here." If they really need to know, "What are your credentials? Can I trust you? Do you have any credibility?" well, if they see degrees on the wall behind you, or they see initials after your name, that speaks for itself.

Is it really going to help to talk about: "Well, I went to Santa Barbara State University." "I went to Harvard." "I went to Yale." "I trained at this location, that location, that location," that they've never heard of. What in the world's it going to do to talk about different schools or different training programs that they've never heard of? Chances are, they need to be focused on why they're there. So, asserting influence strategy number one is: redirect the focus.

Number two: find something to get excited about. We talked about this. Find something about your prospect that you can find genuinely exciting about the possibility of working with them, and express it. That is very influential. It's flattering. It brings the energy up in the room in between you two.

Now, everything that follows are strategies that I lifted from the book, "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion." It's written by Robert Cialdini. It's a really good book. It's pretty technical, and it does not give you many examples that could apply to private practice. [laughs] So I've lifted out the rules of influence and persuasion that apply, that we can use in private practice.

And one is the law of reciprocity. The law of reciprocity says that if you've done something nice for somebody or you've given them something, then they have an unconscious desire to give back, because we like it to be balanced. They feel obligated to give back in some way. And so, this is the power of the free initial consultation, because if you're giving them your time, they're not paying for it, and you're being of service to them, then they feel obligated to give something back.

It's hard to just break it off and not give something back or decide to hire you. But realize, if they have fear and inertia getting in the way, and that's more uncomfortable for them than the law of reciprocity, then they won't be feeling the need to reciprocate. So that's where the free initial consultation is not a selling tool all by itself. It's not guaranteed to create clients.

Yeah, give away your time, and your prospects will want to hire you, because of fear and inertia. However, it is setting up a situation for the law of reciprocity, and there's a number of ways that you can take advantage of that. They are predisposed, or you can predispose them, to working with you and referring to you. When you ask the question, "Who do you know that can benefit from what I do?" they're predisposed to refer to you, or to at least to think about it, give you the courtesy of thinking about, because of all the time that you've already devoted to them.

So don't be shy about requesting because of the law of reciprocity, and you can request continuously at intervals over time with the law of reciprocity. Give your clients, give the people in your network that you provide value to, ways of giving back to you. And they will want to do so, because they feel good about giving back to you if you provided value to them; and that's the law of reciprocity.

Four is the rule of consistency and commitment. The principle here is that prospects feel obligated to follow through in what they say or promise, so you can ask for an intention at the beginning of your enrollment conversation to invoke this rule; such as, “if we meet and I'm helpful to you, will you consider working with me?”

So think about this. You're setting up an free initial consultation and you're asking them, "If we meet and I'm helpful to you, will you consider working with me?" It's not a promise. You're not going to guarantee you're getting a client out of this. You're not really wanting to nail them down. But you're asking for a commitment in intention. From their perspective, you're asking for good faith. Good faith that if we meet, and I'm helpful to you, you will consider working with me. This invokes the rule of consistency and commitment, because after you've met, and you've been helpful, they will more seriously consider working with you because they made this commitment to do so.

Another way to invoke this is to ask them, "If you decide to hire me, when do you plan to get started?" This is before the enrollment conversation. Say, "Well, if you decide to hire me, when do you plan to get started?" "Well, gee, as soon as possible," or "next week," or "next month," or if they really have this desire to -- kind of like people that go to the stores for lunch -- they take advantage of all the free samples, kind of as a lunch. They have no intention of really buying anything.

Occasionally, we get people like that. They take advantage of free initial consultation for the free service. They have no intention of following through with actually hiring you. Wouldn't that be nice to know ahead of time? Not a bad question to ask and it invokes the rule of consistency and commitment. If you decide to hire me, when do you plan to get started? So already you got them in the mindset of the possibility of working with you, and hiring you, and having a mental or actual physical date of when that might start. And they're more positively inclined to working with you -- invoking the rule of consistency and commitment.

Another way of invoking the will of consistency and commitment is to offer a free week, or a free month, or a money-back guarantee. I'm not a big fan of a money-back guarantee for services -- I am for products but not for services -- because services are intangible. But this does provide a bit of an argument for a free week, or a free month, or a money-back guarantee, because once they start working with you, they will feel obligated to continue. They made a commitment, and they are following through on that commitment. It's the rule of consistency and commitment. People feel inclined to be consistent, to do what they say they're going to do, to follow patterns. Remember, behavior follows patterns, and commitment.

So strategy number five is status. This is where if they have the possibility of perceived status in working with you, then it's more attractive. One way is naming famous people who have benefited from your service. These don't have to be clients that you worked with. You say, "Well, Oprah had Dr. Phil. I can be your Dr. Phil." Or "The best athletes in the world have a coach. Even the president has trusted advisors. If you hire me to be your trusted advisor, you'll be just like the President of the United States." You don't have to say that, but that's what's being implied. So its status. If you can ever invoke status, that they will increase their status by working with you -- even if it's just perceived -- then they are more inclined to hire you. If they can think of people that they like and respect, that they look up to, that engage services like yours, that's invoking the rule of status.

Number six is social proof. This is where testimonials come in handy from clients or former clients: endorsements from experts, and champions, and referral sources. If you can quote people that have said great things about you, that's social proof. If they can talk to other people that have worked with you, that's even better. If they can hear their voices, not only do you have a written testimonial, but you have an audio testimonial, even a video testimonial -- very, very, very powerful.

Another way of invoking social proof, is telling stories of past successes with similar clients. So once you know about their situation, it works very well to share a story about a similar client that you worked with, and how it went for them -- social proof. So testimonials, endorsements, success stories, people that are willing to say that you're good at what you do.

A referral is also a form of social proof, because somebody wouldn't be referring to you unless they thought you were good. So it doesn't even have to be stated. It's an unstated form of social proof. So there's many ways that you can use social proof. The primary ways are endorsements and testimonials. Some of us have confidentiality regulations in our profession. Financial advisors do, therapists do, and so we can't use testimonials, but you can get around that. There's other you can use. You can use endorsements. Remember, endorsements are other experts or referral sources. They're not actual clients. The regulations say you can't use client testimonials, but endorsements are not testimonials. You didn't actually work with those people. Those people are just saying that your book is great, or your service is great, or whatever. They referred 10 people to you, and those people are very happy. Another way of getting around it is to use excerpts, and sometimes change the names, or just provide initials, or something like that. It's less powerful because you can make those up -- people know that. But something is better than nothing.

Strategy number seven, in terms of asserting influence, is the rule of like. A prospect, if they like you, then they are more disposed to hire you. And so attributes that contribute to "liking" include: physical attractiveness. And this doesn't mean that you look like a model. It means that different people are attracted to different physical types. Some people like brown hair, some people like blond hair. Some people like tall people, other people like short people. It's not really about how attractive you think you are. It's about how attractive they think you are. Don't worry about a makeover or anything; just know that you will be physically attractive to a certain segment of the population there. Having your photo is a great way of invoking this. Have your photo on your business card, on your website. Even in the waiting room of your office and people will want to work with you if they consider you to be physically attractive. So that invokes the principle of like. They will like you if they consider you to be physically attractive

-- to them. Very individual.

Also, similarity -- birds of a feather flock together. We tend to like people that are similar. This is where you communicate more fully who you are. People that see that they have something in common with you, will tend to like you more. On your profile on your website, you might say -- down towards the bottom, where it's more about your personal hobbies -- you might say, "I'm passionate about golf." Other people that like golf, they'll see that and they'll say, "Oh, well we've got that in common." They'll tend to like you more, because they see it. Another thing that causes people to like you, is when you pay them compliments, appreciation, finding something you like about them, and paying them compliments causes them to like you more.

Another thing is contact; repetitious contact over time. The more contact you have with somebody, the more inclined you are to like them. I like Alex Mandossian's attitude about contact. He's a very, very, effective marketer, and he's not shy about marketing. He sends out these broadcasts; he sends them out regularly; he's in your face. Say, "Well, either turn me up, or turn me off." Which means, "Either hire me, or buy from me, or benefit from what I'm providing you, or get off my list!" And I think that's an effective attitude, which is, if people are attracted, they have regular contact with you, it's working for them, they'll want to turn up the volume. They'll want to work with you more. If they're not attracted to you, and you have more contact with them, they'll want to turn down the volume; they'll want to turn it off; they'll want to break off contact with you. And that's just fine. Your service, your product, you, cannot please everybody. So you want to put yourself out there enough to connect with the people that are attracted to you, that you can help -- not worry about turning off or turning away the people that are not attracted.

The last attribute in invoking the principle of like is conditioning from past experiences. People are more inclined to like you if they have had positive past experiences with you. This is where conducting a monthly seminar series, or having regular gatherings, or checking in with somebody regularly. The more positive past experiences they have with you, the more inclined they are to hire you, and refer to you, and like you. So this is the principle of like, these are ways to invoke the principle of like: physical attractiveness, similarity, compliments, contact over time, and conditioning through past experiences.

Strategy number eight of asserting influence is the principle of authority. This is how you dress, or how you speak, and acting the part, and having your degrees and licenses, and credentials, and titles -- having a commanding presence. In the coaching world we call it "having an edge." This is about invoking the principle of authority. If you want to have a successful practice, you want people to pay you a lot of money, maybe you need to go from a $30 dress to a $200 suit, or from a $200 suit to a $500 suit. The more you dress the part, speak the part, act the part, the more people will take you seriously, consider you an authority, respect you, want to work with you, want to pay you more money.

[laughs] It's funny. It's hilarious, almost. One year, in my practice, I looked at my fees, and I realized I hadn't raised my fees in four or five years. "Oh my gosh! I've really got to raise my fees!" But I really wanted to raise it significantly--I'm talking a $50 or $75 jump--and I felt a bit insecure about raising my fees that huge a jump. I did it anyway, because I needed to, kicking myself in the butt: "How could I let this go this long?"

But what I did was I got a whole new wardrobe. I spent $1,000, $1,200 at the local men's store getting myself some new suits and shirts and shoes and pants and ties and everything. And I decided: "Well, if I'm going to be charging this amount, I'd better look the part."

I don't know if it worked. It must have worked because people didn't complain about the fee. I started getting more private paying clients, and they were paying me more money, so it did work. It's an example of invoking the principle of authority: looking the part, speaking the part, acting the part. People will tend to respect you, like you, want to work with you, actually want to pay you money, if you come off like an authority.

Number nine is the principle of scarcity or exclusivity. It's probably a good idea to let people know that you have a waiting list, that you work only with people you want to work with, or you work with only a select few clients.

And you don't have to lie. If you don't have a waiting list and you don't want to say you have a waiting list, then don't. But if you say you work with only people that you want to work with, make that a true statement. You work with only a select few clients, make that a true statement. Tell them that an opening will only be available for a limited time, as you have other people that you're meeting with that might want that slot.

So you're talking to somebody, and you say, "Well, I have an opening Thursday at 3:00." And then the prospect says, "Well, let me think about it. I'll get back to you." You might say something like, "Well, I need to hear from you by tomorrow, Friday at 5:00, because I have other people that might be interested in that slot as well."

You don't have to lie. There are other people in the world that might be interested in that slot. Any time you can invoke the principle of scarcity or exclusivity you stimulate people into action.

Scarcity means that "Ooh, I'd better act or I'm going to miss out." Exclusivity means: "Ooh, if I'm his client, I'm part of this small, exclusive circle. That means I'm special." And wouldn't you like to make your clients feel special? And wouldn't it be nice to charge a lot of money and only work with a few clients?

Would you rather work with 20 people a week and make $100 an hour, or 10 people a week and make $200 an hour, or five people a week and make $500 an hour? Or only have two clients and get $10,000 a month from each one of them? This is your practice. You get to do it your way.

The principle of scarcity and exclusivity means that the more scarce your services are, the harder it is to work with you, the more exclusive it is, the more attractive you become. It's pretty cool. So, in our implementation lab on Friday, part of the agenda there will be to help you determine how you can apply these principles in influencing your boulders to hire you.

So, I'd like to move along right now to page 11 in the Study Guide, section six: addressing crazy-making fear-based questions. These are things that your boulders are going to say, and what will be your strategy, your plan, for handling it? And we've already talked about some ideas, but here are some, what I call, crazy-making questions--crazy-making because, most of the time, they don't really need to know the answer. It's about the fear. It's about the inertia.

So, question number one: "How much do you charge?" Oftentimes, when it's a Yellow Page ad or an advertisement, this might be the first question they ask, because they don't know what else to ask. And if that's all they're concerned about, you don't want to work with somebody that's shopping by price. You don't want to be the discount provider, that they're only working with you because you're charging the cheapest rate.

So, when they ask, "How much do you charge?" my recommendation is to say, "Well, that depends upon the service and the client. So I would need to talk with you about your situation and about what you need first. When would you like to do that?" So you want to set up an enrollment conversation. You don't want to answer their question, "How much do you charge?" until towards the end of the enrollment conversation.

So, question number two: "What's your success rate?" This is a no-win question. If you have an extremely high success rate, and if you were to do the research and say, "Well, my success rate is 89.1". Well, in their mind, they would be part of the10.9 percent that would not benefit from your services. And you can't say, "My success rate is 100 percent." You're talking about an intangible service that generally is pretty hard to measure. Very, very few private practice professionals do follow up research to actually prove and demonstrate their success rate. They're asking this because they're afraid, their wondering whether your service would really work for them or not. So you need to address that. Trying to come up with some success rate or address it directly doesn't work. So you need to redirect them. And one way you can do that, and say, "Well, I work with different kinds of people with different kinds of challenges, needs, and goals. And that's really hard to answer that question straight out. Tell me more about your situation." So boom -- you're back into the enrollment conversation.

Question three and four are similar. Where did you go to school? Where did you get your training? It's crazy making because usually the name of the school or the training location won't mean anything to this person. It won't make them more inclined to hire you, or less inclined to hire you; it's just more information. It doesn't mean a thing. So how can you respond to that? Say, well, "I went to school and trained at some of the top locations in the country. I doubt you would know of them, though, unless you're in this field. So let's talk more about your situation and we'll see if I can help you." So you get them back into the enrollment conversation. You might give them a little tidbit. You might say, "Well, I graduated from UC Santa Barbara, and I trained in about 15 different locations around this county. So can you tell me more about your situation?" Be brief, be vague, get off of it as soon as possible.

Question five: Do you provide a guarantee? From our perspective it's incredulous. Why would anybody ask us? We provide an intangible service. There's no guarantees. Even a surgeon can't guarantee their surgery. An accountant cannot guarantee that you will not be audited. All of us professionals -- we just do our best. We're being paid for our time, our skills, our expertise. We've had a lot of experience, a lot of training to be able to do what we do, but there's no guarantee.

When people ask this, oftentimes, it throws us for a loop...”Ah, ah, ah huh, what? A guarantee?” So have a planned response. Somebody asks you, "Do you provide guarantee?" you say very simply "Well this service (being your accountant, chiropractor, surgeon, counselor, therapist, coach), is sometimes hard to measure and there is never a guarantee. But what I can absolutely guarantee you is that I will apply 100 percent of my skills, and training, and experience to help you.”

Sometimes people just need to be reassured of what they can count on. They need something to count on because it all seems so intangible. “Therapy -- I'm going to go to therapy every week for the rest of my life. What am I actually get out of it.” “Coaching -- I'm going to hire a coach, work with a coach. The coach is promising me results. I wonder if they'll guarantee it.” So they need to be oriented into the realities of professional services. Not just yours, but all professional services. Nobody provides an absolute guarantee. So if they're asking this question, they're just insecure. They need to know what they can count on. “I guarantee that I will give you 100 percent of my skills, my experience, and my training to help you with this problem” -- one possibility.

Number six: This one is easy. "Do you have a sliding scale?" Similar question is: "Do you provide a discount?" or, "Gee, $150 an hour is kind of high, would you accept $95 an hour?" The answer to all these questions is very, very, simple. "No. No, I do not have a sliding scale. I don't negotiate my fees. I don't provide a discount. I'm not willing to accept less than this."

And if you think about it, the car mechanic, the refrigerator repairman, the plumber -- your car's broken down, your refrigerator doesn't work, your plumbing's backed up. You contact this professional; they give you a quote on how much it'll charge to fix it. Do you ever negotiate with them? Do they ever accept negotiations? Say, "Well sir, you need a new transmission. It's going to cost $1,000." "Well, gee, I'm not sure I can afford that. I only have $650. Would you accept that?" The guy has your car in his garage. He knows it's not going nowhere; neither are you. Say, well, "Nope, that's the cost." He has cost of parts, he has cost of labor. He needs to make some money on it.

Every once in a while, you get a little bit of negotiation going, they'll knock off one percent, five percent, ten percent; but very rarely. Most of the time the quote they give you is what it's going to cost. They don't negotiate that. And you respect them for it. If you want people to respect you, and benefit from your services, do not negotiate. You want to have a successful practice; you want to make a comfortable living. You want your clients to benefit from what you do: charge full fee, all the time. Do not negotiate that. Do not have a sliding scale.

The only exception is when you are starting out, and you are hungry, and people know you're starting out, and you just need to get some experience under your belt, you need to get a track record with some clients, and having a sliding scale or having discounted fees is fine to start out with to get your feet wet; to establish your track record, to get your practice off the ground. My strong suggestion, recommendation is to not do so forever; make it time limited, no more than preferably maybe six months.

In our bonus seminar coming up in two weeks we're going to cover, "Maximizing Your Private Practice Income." I have some very strict rules and guidelines around this. You just heard one of them, which is "Never negotiate your fees."

So those are some very common crazy making fear-based questions that I've observed; that I've seen come up over, and over, and over. Some ideas for handling them--you can come up with your own ideas and strategies. I would suggest printing out the Study Guide and crafting your own answer to each one; what would you do if somebody said, "How much do you charge?" What would you do if somebody asked you, "What is your success rate?" What would you say if somebody asked you, "Where did you go to school? Where did you get your training?"

Knowing that if you directly answer the question, it's not going to mean anything to them; it won't help them hire you. What would be your response to, "Do you provide a guarantee?" "Do you have a sliding scale?" On Friday we can brainstorm, and we can help you craft your individual, specific responses if you like.

So, right now I would like to introduce you to the #1 objection that I've seen prospective clients have. The scariest one to most private practice professionals that we have the hardest time dealing with; the biggest objection that I've seen is, "Gee. I'd really like to, but I just can't afford it right now."

If we charge a large fee and we want it in cash or credit card; we don't want to take insurance, we want a full-fee private pay practice, then this question is the one that gets in the way the most, "Well gee I'd like to, but I just can't afford it right now."

Well I have one problem with that question, a big problem. It has to do with it's being asked by somebody that has engaged you; they are a prospect for you, they've gotten onto your radar screen. You've engaged a conversation with them; you maybe even had an enrollment conversation with them. You've already spent a half hour or an hour. How in the world is it possible that somebody that has no hope in hell of hiring you would be getting this far?

Generally people that really can't afford it, they would be seeking their resources elsewhere. They wouldn't be talking with somebody that charges $150 an hour, or $600 a month--or whatever it is. So what I propose is it is never about not being able to afford it, it is never about the money. It is always about fear and urnasha.

But how do you counter this objection? "Gee, I'd really like to. I'm not sure I can afford it right now." What they're really doing is saying, "I'm scared," or "I'm having a hard time seeing that this is really going to work for me to the point where I should make this sacrifice to make it happen." "I got this vacation coming up to the Bahamas." "I want to buy a new car." "I have money, but I have other things I want to do with it."

They're not going to say that, that's what's going on unconsciously or in the back of their mind. So it comes out as, "Well, gee I'd like to. I just can't afford it right now." How in the world can they get this far and say that? It's fear, it's inertia. It's not really about the money; I promise you.

So, let me share with you my #1 strategy for countering this objection. It's actually very, very simple, and very, very effective for several reasons. Here's the strategy; you suggest they get sponsored. It can go like this--the question is, "Well, who do you know that cares about you would like to see you solve this problem or be successful that can help you pay for it?" “Who do you know that cares about you that would like to see you overcome this problem and become successful, that can help you pay for it?”

You're suggesting that they get subsidized, that they get sponsored. In my practice I've had lots of clients that were being paid for by their parents, or their employer, or their friends chipped in. It is not unusual at all. In fact because of our "Lone Ranger" culture, it's unusual for us to ask.

But as a relationship coach, I consider that dysfunctional that we can't even ask for support. We can't be honest with the people that care about us and let them know that we're having a problem; and that we can't afford to solve the problem, and that there's a support resource that we found that will help us with the problem, but we can't afford it and need some help.

It is healthy to be supportable, to be honest with your friends and family to ask for their support. It's not forever, and hopefully you would be there for each other. People would help you out, you'd be helping them out too.

So, it is dysfunctional not to ask for help. When people say, "Well, I can't afford it," one of several things might be true. One is they really can't afford it, which I find to be incongruous. How can they get this far and really not afford it, or what they're saying, what's true here is they don't have the money for it, and they're too ashamed or embarrassed or reluctant to ask for help.

Well, do you really want to enable them? So, I suggest countering this objection. This isn't the only way to do it. This is my favorite way of doing it, to provide them the suggestion that they get sponsored and to simply respond by asking, "Who do you know that can help you? Who cares about you enough that they'd really like to see you get the service you need to overcome this problem or become successful?"

It could be loans. It could be grants. It could be gifts. It could be people chipping in. It could be just one sponsor. It could be time limiting. It could be just for a month. It could be two months or three months. It doesn't have to be forever.

It becomes much more workable if you add it up. OK, well, three months would be $1,500, and I need $1,500. Well, it would be 15 of my friends chipping in $100, or three of my family members chipping in $500, or my rich uncle writing me a check and saying I'll mow his lawn every week for the rest of my life.

So, what this does is several things. If they truly can't afford it, it addresses it effectively. If they are just saying they can't afford it, then it takes the wind out of that argument. And they have to deal with the reality of, "Well, I really need some support here, some help here. Here's a resource for doing it. I need to make a decision."

Well, I just found it to be a very, very effective way to handle that objection. So, give it a try and if you want, we can brainstorm some other responses on Friday to the "I can't afford it right now" question. But, it's just been the number one objection that I've seen, and that's my favorite way of handling it.

On Page 12 of the Study Guide - Effective Follow-up Strategies. The number one most important enrollment strategy is following up. If you don't have to follow-up with them, they are bluebirds. Bluebirds are wonderful. There's never enough of them, at least, in the beginning.

Eighty percent or more of your prospects will be boulders. They will require some pushing and pulling and effort and coaxing, and they'll have objections. You need to address those objections. You need to be patient. You need to save their soul, and following up is the key to doing this.

When you are engaged in the enrollment conversation, your goal is to close. Your goal is to get them to hire you, and you want to have your strategies for countering objections all planned out. And you want to get lots and lots of practice for having these conversations. But, when they don't hire you right away and they're a prospect but they haven't hired you yet, don't let them get away. Don't just forget about them, follow up with them.

How do you follow up? Six strategies. No. 1, use contact management software to track and plan your contacts. You need to track these people. You need to know what date you saw them. You need to plan a date to follow up with them, and you need to be able to do that. You need to plan these contacts out.

Strategy No. two is you need to provide value or gifts. We talked about this in previous modules. You can follow up by giving them a book, sending them an eBook or an eProgram, giving them an article, offering them a free service or a complimentary session down the road. You can offer limited scholarships, a gift certificate, key chain, mug, referral incentive, time limited discounts.

Those are all ideas for stimulating your prospects into action. The ones that you are already engaged and connected with but haven't decided to hire you yet.

Strategy No. three is following up by email. This includes newsletters, announcements, calls to action, offers, and incentives. You can broadcast them to a large group, your whole list. And they can also be individual. Now, people know it when it's a broadcast to a group or it's individual.

If I were to broadcast to my entire list and I would say, "I have room in my practice for three new clients, and I am offering a free month for anybody that signs up today. If you are interested, call me or reply right now." If that's going out to a large group, an individual would know that.

I could send it to the individual and say, "Hey, you know, I know we talked about a month ago about the possibility of working with me. I do have an opening in my practice. If you'd like to take advantage of that, I'd be willing to give you a free month if you're willing to sign up today. It's very, very different being broadcast to a group than being communicated to an individual.

If it's to an individual, you might even call and leave that as a voicemail message or get them on the phone in person -- great. You can follow up by email. You can follow up by mail. You can follow up by telephone, and you can follow up in person.

It's powerful to follow up in person. When you have an in-person practice, you are part of your community. That's where you live. That's where you work. You are dealing with other people that live and work in that community. It's very, very powerful to drop by their office or follow-up in person in some way. Get together for lunch. Drop off a book. In terms of influencing somebody, when you are in their personal force field is when you have the most influence.

Those are our strategies for following up: contact management software; some way of planning and tracking your contacts; providing value and gifts; number of door openers; email, mail, telephone, and in person.

Page 13 of your Study Guide - I'd like to introduce you to our 24-hour challenge. Now that we've gone through the enrollment conversation, the four closing questions, overcoming objections, you are ready for our 24-hour challenge.

The 24-hour challenge is powerful. It WILL get results for you. It will result in clients and/or referrals. And if you make contacts and you end up getting referrals out of it, that is a big win. It's not just about getting clients; however, the 24-hour challenge has the potential to get you clients within short order.

And so, here's the way the 24-hour challenge starts. It starts with the mindset. Pretend this is a reality TV show, and you will win a million dollars if you can get one new paying client in the next 24 hours. "Wow! Boy, oh boy! I will win a million dollars! All I've got to do is get one new paying client?" OK. Well, what would you do? You'd get into action. You'd be inspired. You'd be motivated.

Just think of the people on "The Apprentice" working with Donald Trump. They are motivated. They are in action. They really want that job. They really want to win. They really want to beat out the other guy. And any other reality TV show: "Survivor." Winning the million dollars. You name it. Getting in that mindset and getting that motivated and getting that excited about winning or the result.

Now, if that mindset doesn't work for you, you don't want to do that: go ahead, don't do it. But get yourself in a mindset of determination, self-direction: "I'm determined to get a client. I know I can get a client. I'm going to sit down and do this and get myself a client."

So, step one is: go ahead and gather the contact information of everybody you know. In earlier modules, we've encouraged you to gather your contact information of people you know into a database so that it can work for you. So, in this case, you want to make a list of prospects that you can contact--people that will be positively inclined to hear from you, and that might hire you or refer to you.

And go ahead and follow the path of least resistance: the most likely prospects at the top of the list, in rank order, all the way down to the least likely prospects. So, gather all the contact information of everybody, and identify the prospects that you want to contact: number one, number two, number three, all the way down the line.

And then, step two: write a script for leaving an enticing voicemail. Now, when you call people, you are most likely going to get an answering machine or a voicemail, so write a script. What would you say if you were to leave a voicemail? And assume that if you get your voicemail that you can say something that will compel them to call you back.

What would that be? Get creative. And then, chances are that whatever you would leave in a voicemail would also be something that you can say in person when you actually get them on the phone. So, get creative. Write a script for leaving an enticing voicemail.

Step three: when you get them on the phone, tell them why you're calling. Tell them that you're in practice, that you have an opening for a few clients, that you thought about them. Give them your laser speech. Describe what you do and for who, and ask them about their situation.

Your goal is to get them to talk. You want to just naturally enter an enrollment conversation, as if they had called you based on a referral--as if they were just contacting you. You want to be of service. So, when you get them on the phone, certainly you can tell them why you're calling. As soon as possible, you want them talking about what's going on to them. And you ask the questions and you mirror and you do everything in the enrollment conversation checklist.

And then, step four is: use the four closing questions. And we went over those. So, at some point in the conversation, you're going to segue, and you say, "You know what? It's been great talking with you. It's been about 20 minutes now. Has this been helpful to you? Would you like to continue this conversation sometime?"

"Oh, cool. When's good for you?"

"Do you know anyone else that can benefit from what I do?" Or, "Who do you know that can benefit from what I do?"

So the idea of the 24-hour challenge is to make a list of your prospects--most hottest likely prospects at the top--sit down, get on the phone, work that list until you get results. Basically, it's following up.

And I want to share with you my inspiration for the 24-hour challenge. My inspiration is my friend and former business partner, Marv Cohen. He and I ran a singles organization in Silicon Valley. When I transitioned my practice to relationship coaching, and I decided I wanted to serve the singles of Silicon Valley, I started a weekly singles event. And he was attracted to that.

He's a coach, and he thought it was just a cool way to be a relationship coach and to reach people, and so we ended up becoming partners. And as a result, we were doing classes and workshops for the people in our network, the people that attended these weekly events.

And so we'd have a regular class--the Conscious Dating class, basically--and start a new one about every other month. And every time we were ready to start one, Marv would get into action and he'd start marketing that class. First, he would market it by standing in front of the room and announcing the class. Then, we'd send it out on our listserv to let people know about the class and start enrolling for the class, talking to people that we'd met at the singles events about the class.

About a week or two prior to the start date of the class, Marv would take a look at the openings that he had. He was determined to fill the class. He didn't want any openings. He wanted a full class every time. We had these classes in our office, in person. The office - the large one- could sit about eighteen people. So he wanted all eighteen of those chairs filled.

About a week or two before the class would start, he would count up how many openings he had. He would sit at his desk, get on the phone and work his prospect list that he's been developing over the past month or two through our weekly singles events, all the conversations that we'd been having with different people, through referrals we got, to the people who said they were interested in the past but didn't sign up.

He would gather all these prospects together, then he'd get on the phone and he would not get up until the class filled. Sometimes it took him an hour, sometimes it took him three hours. He did it every time! I was amazed at this guy! I could never do that in a million years, you know?

It was my inspiration seeing him actually sitting down on the phone with full intention to get a client, to get someone to sign up, to enroll. These were people that he'd already talked to, people that we already knew. So these were definitely prospects. This was not 'cold calling' at all.

So that's the basis of the 24 hour challenge: to follow up with your prospects with determination, with intention. Sit down and do not get up until you get a client or a referral. If you've got to get up to eat or go to the bathroom, go ahead- but give yourself 24 hours and I guarantee you, you will get results if you do this.

Everyone in our practice-building programs for the past seven or eight years that have tried this have gotten results - either a client or a referral - everyone! Not the people that didn't do it, but the people that did it.

And here's the cool thing: if you can get one client, you can get two. If you can get two clients, you can get three. And if you do this you will have proven to yourself that you can get clients whenever you want.

This will raise your confidence in your ability to enroll. It will guarantee your success in private practice. This skill, this ability to enroll clients will guarantee your success in private practice - guarantee it.

In today's module, we've covered all the tricks and skills of enrollment. If you do this and you take our 24-hour challenge, you will prove to yourself that you can get a client any time you want. You can fill your practice, then, any time you want. So go get hired. That is my mandate for you today.

Between now and Friday, follow our four-step action plan: choose three strategies to get prospects to engage you and implement them, practice three enrollment conversations, choose a follow-up strategy and implement it, and take our 24 hour challenge.

I look forward to our implementation lab on Friday. We will get down and dirty in problem-solving this and brainstorming it and supporting you so that you can enroll a client, get a client, get hired any time you want.

Woman: The one question I've had in my own mind forever: What could be a good enough message to leave on somebody's messaging machines so they would call you back? Is it possible for you to give one off-the-top-of-your-head example of that? I always wondered about that.

David: Yeah, sure. Definitely on Friday for the implementation lab we can problem-solve that for you.

Woman: Sure.

David: ...In your situation. But here's an off-the-top-of-the-head example:

Woman: Great.

David: Start and say, "Oh, hi, Kathleen, this is David calling. We talked last month about the possibility of working together. I just wanted to let you know that I have an opening and it's just at the time and day that you said you wanted, but you weren't ready. I'm not sure how much longer it's going to be open, and it is only one opening. And you know what? I really enjoy you and want to work with you. If you'd like to get started I have a little bonus for you: How about we include the first couple of weeks at no charge? Just to kind of get you started."

So, you know, "My number is da da da da da, my email is da da da da da, I'd like to hear from you."

Woman: OK, I've got it, thank you. That makes sense to me, thank you.

David: You want it to be compelling. You want to remind them that you do have a history with them - you have had contact with them before.

Woman: Uh huh.

David: And you want to give them a call to action - a reason to act right now as opposed to waiting.

Woman: OK, great! Thank you.

David: You're welcome.

Thank you very much for joining us and for spending three whole hours with us. I'll see you for the implementation lab on Friday.

This is a very important module. I really, really want you to get into action with this because enrollment is where it's at. If you can enroll a client, you can fill your practice. It's up to you. It's not about hoping to be picked. It's about your power to connect with people and encourage them to hire you.

So go forth and get some clients, and we'll see you on Friday.