

Introduction

Tough times are good! Without tough times, the world as you know it today would not exist. Without tough times, the success you enjoy today would not exist. Without tough times, the deep relationships you have built would not exist. Although tough times don't feel good, tough times lead to good in the end. The tough times you experience today lead to tomorrow's success.

At an early age, we are taught that tough times are bad. This continues throughout adulthood. Whether it's from the mainstream media, a boss, colleagues, family, or friends, we are all programmed to believe tough times are bad. So we fear tough times. Tough times are painful, so naturally we try to avoid the pain. Paradoxically, what we are trying to avoid is what we need—pain catalyzes change. By avoiding the pain of tough times, we avoid the benefits of tough times. Instead, when we embrace tough times, impossible success becomes probable. Like manure in a field, the crap you experience helps you grow.

Tough times force you to get better. They expose weaknesses and spark creativity; they refocus your energy and clarify your purpose. Tough times are like physical therapy for the soul. At times, it's uncomfortable and painful, but that pain leads to something far greater. Tough times are good!

Tough times humble you. Good times bring success. That success generates an inflated sense of self. The wave of success only pushes us so far. Momentum is generated by the wave, not the individual. This is why you catch a wave, not create one. When the wave reaches the shore, you exhaustedly paddle back out. Paddling out strengthens us to catch an even bigger wave on our next ride. Tough times humble you and at the same time help you. Tough times are good!

Tough times create unique and unexpected opportunities. In tough times, you create more opportunities than you find. This book is filled with examples of tough times creating opportunities. Good times feel great, but

good times obscure our view toward even greater opportunities. When things are good, sellers lack the desire to find something greater. The sting of tough times creates the courage and desire to pursue such opportunities. Tough times are good!

Tough times thin the herd. Tough times are destructive and democratic. Some competitors will not survive tough times. A thinning herd means an abundance of opportunities for you. Tough times are challenging, and some customers and colleagues will not survive. Those are the toughest lessons. The toughest lessons lead to the greatest triumphs. That extreme pain catalyzes the individual to grow and eventually flourish. Tough times are good though not pain free.

Selling through tough times requires the right attitude and the right skills—this book provides the tools to find both. You'll learn the right mental framework and the skills to thrive through tough times. Selling through tough times requires a different mindset and sales approach. Throughout this book, you will gain a deeper understanding of how selling through tough times is different. There are six *critical selling activities* (CSAs) to guide your effort through tough times. The basic principles of selling are constant, but tough times add a new dynamic that forces you to adapt. These CSAs guide you through the tough times and help you prevail once they subside. Success through tough times is about daily progress—moving forward when times are the toughest. This book is filled with exercises that will help you to transfer ideas into daily activities.

Tough times are relative to the industry and the individual. Neither has a monopoly on tough times. Everyone experiences tough times to varying degrees. Some go through them; others *grow* through them. Regardless of how tough your time is, someone always has it tougher than you, and someone always has it easier than you. Don't waste your energy comparing your tough times to anyone else's.

In this book, you'll learn what it takes to be a tough-timer. Tough-timers thrive mentally and financially during tough times and fly even higher once tough times pass. You'll learn to think and sell like a tough timer. There is a tough-timer within all of us, but this inner strength is revealed only through tough times. Don't get frustrated if you don't feel like a tough-timer; maybe you haven't experienced enough tough times to reveal your true strength. In this book, you'll learn how to challenge yourself every day and thrive like a tough-timer.

Part III of this book provides additional selling and leadership tips. Selling through tough times is an opportunity to get back to the basics of selling and leadership. Included are segments on pipeline management, customer messaging, and leadership. Chapter 16 includes basic principles for leading and coaching your team through tough times.

Tough times are good! I hope that you don't merely go through tough times; I hope that you *grow* through tough times. Take full advantage of the tough time you are currently experiencing. Your progress will be painful and not always visible, but it will be meaningful. Happy selling!