

"The whole drive out, we talked about nothing else but what a weak-minded numbskull we had as a client.

"Well, the conference that afternoon was cold. Looking back, I think our client sensed somehow the way we felt toward him. He must have thought: 'These fellows think I'm stupid or something, and all they're going to do for my money is give me some smooth-sounding talk.'

"Two days later I got a two-sentence letter from this client. It said, 'I've decided to cancel our contract for your consulting services. If there is a charge for your services to date, please bill me.'

"Printing ourselves with negative thoughts for only forty minutes cost us a contract. What made it even more painful was learning about a month later that this former client had contracted with an out-of-town firm for the professional assistance he needed.

"We would never have lost him had we concentrated on his many fine qualities. And he has them. Most people do."

Here's how you can have some fun and discover a basic success principle at the same time. For the next two days listen in on as many conversations as you can. Note two things: which person in the conversation does the most talking and which person is the more successful.

Hundreds of my own little experiments have revealed this: *The person who does the most talking and the person who is the most successful are rarely the same person.* Almost without exception, the more successful the person, the more he practices *conversation generosity*, that is, he encourages the other person to talk about himself, *his* views, *his* accomplishments, *his* family, *his* job, *his* problems.

Conversation generosity paves the way to greater success in two important ways: