

The “Elevator Speech”™

Idreaded going to holidays or group functions when we were in the baby-creating mode because—inevitably—someone would ask THE question.

“So, when are you two going to have a baby?” Aunt Clarice would ask.

This question sent me into a panic. Scanning the room in vain for Mark to come to my rescue, I repeated the question back to my relative in hopes of buying myself some time to come up with a better reply. “What? When are we going to have a baby?” I squeaked out.

A male friend of Mark’s once explained to me that when a man answers a question with “What?” it’s like oxygen to them, giving their brains a chance to figure out how to answer the question or get out of the situation altogether. It wasn’t until we were in the baby-creating mode that I fully understood and implemented the “What?” response.

That simple “What?” gave me extra seconds to navigate through difficult questions and observations: “When are you going to have a baby?” “Don’t you want children?” “Boy, it takes you a long time to

get pregnant!” And so on and so on. Of course, the “What?” tactic would only take me so far. Though good for use against surprise attacks, it earned only mere seconds. Then it would be back to me standing there, mouth half-open, panicked, searching the room for Mark to come and rescue me. At that stage, I was paralyzed by both the question and the anticipation of being questioned. This fear kept me home many nights.

Then Mark had a brilliant idea. Enter lucky Strategy Thirteen: The “Elevator Speech.”™*

Mark uses this communication technique in one of our seminars. Through this seminar, Mark helps salespeople and financial advisors create a compelling thirty-second script to explain what they do and why a potential client might want to learn more about their services. The goal is to create a quick speech that will get your point across to someone in the time it takes for an elevator to go from one floor to the next.

Mark’s brilliant idea was to apply this strategy to answering the questions about our plans for creating a family. This method worked wonders for me and took away the feelings of dread I’d attached to attending group functions. Being armed with a script will give you a feeling of security, and will empower you enough to avoid those emotional breakdowns that can leave you in tears and gasping for breath.

Putting It into Practice

The “Elevator Speech” also incorporates the strategy of visualization (see Strategy Three on page 21). You’ll be rehearsing for such

* Adapted from “The Elevator Speech” from *The Product Is You* by Mark Magnacca, pp 45-61.

exchanges and preparing yourself to be confident at future family gatherings and other social events.

- ❖ On a sheet of paper, write out the question you hear most often or the one you dread the most. For example (a common favorite!) “So, when are you going to have a baby?”
- ❖ Take your time and think about some rational responses to that question that will put an end to the conversation, with no hard feelings on either end. Here are a few examples that we used and some that were shared by the couples who have attended our seminars:
 - * “Babies come when babies come”
 - * “I would love to have a baby; sometimes it isn’t as easy as it seems.”
 - * “We have a whole team of people working on it.”
 - * “It’s a long story.”
 - * “Not right now, but you’ll be the first person I call when we do.”
- ❖ Try to come up with a few of your own. Keep in mind the various people or family members who might be asking the question, and be prepared for follow-up questions. Remember that your answer should be gentle but firm.
- ❖ Now close your eyes and visualize yourself using the responses that you came up with. Notice which response feels or sounds the best to you during your mental movie.
- ❖ Then repeat your answer again and again until you feel comfortable saying it. Try practicing your “Elevator Speech” in front of the mirror. You could even practice this with your

partner. Perhaps you might want to take turns asking the question and each of you responding with your individual “Elevator Speeches.”

Another job well done! Now you’re ready for any baby-related interrogation!