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(Shake, Shake, Shake) Don't Shake Your Booty

A killer alternative to a toxic mistake. Do this and watch your prospecting success jump to new heights.

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Deep within the rainforest of Central America there's a whole lot o' shakin' going on. It isn't earthquakes rocking the *neotropical* jungle. Nor is it the rumbling of volcanoes disturbing the lush green canopy. The vibrations to which I refer are caused by a much less imposing culprit.

The majesty of Creation never ceases to amaze me. Rainforests are home to innumerable species of critters. Some of these critters stand out in both behavior and appearance. At the top of this list are the *anurans*, commonly known as "frogs." Neotropical frogs come in a dizzying array of colors, and they have flamboyant names to match—Strawberry poison dart frog, Blue-jeans frog, and the Golden poison dart frog just to name a few.

Not all Central American jungle frogs are poisonous, though. Take the one in this lesson, for instance. While it *is* adorned in extravagant colors, it *isn't* the least bit dangerous. Zoologists and herpetologists know it as *Agalychnis callidryas*. Mere mortals, like you and me, know it as the Red-eyed tree frog.

While the Red-eyed tree frog (RETF) gets its name from its huge, bulging, striking red eyes, its entire body is robed in eye-catching colors. With bright leaf-green on the back and head, neon orange feet, light blue and yellow bars on the sides, and electric blue upper legs, this frog is one conspicuous-looking little dude.¹ And this, it turns out, plays perfectly into the genius of His design.

You might think wearing all those bright colors makes the RETF an easy mark. I mean neon orange and electric blue don't exactly seem like ideal camouflage against the leafy shadows of a rainforest. And if that's what you're thinking, you're 100% correct. That's why Mr. Red Eyes makes a point to **not** show off all those vivid hues.

Time's fun when you're having flies.

—Kermit

Red Eyes, you see, is nocturnal.² He's active at night when the jungle is dark. During the light of day, he rests. And he is *very* particular about his rest. To start with, when possible, RETF attempts to duck out of sight by latching onto the bottom side of a large leaf.² Naturally, closing his eyes covers the intense red of his irises.³ But the sneaky little frog goes a step beyond that. He also flattens his body against the leaf, tucking his brightly colored legs and feet underneath.^{3, 4} In this manner only his green back is exposed.⁴

If the camouflage strategy fails; if a predator unsettles the frog despite its best efforts to hide, the disturbed frog leaps into action. Literally—with a *startle display*.⁴ He snaps opens his eyes flashing those large, intensely red peepers, thereby startling the predator.^{3,4} In the ensuing moment of confusion, the frog hopes to make a frantic hop to safety. This exposes the remaining bright colors on his feet, legs, and flanks, which serve to further confuse the startled predator.^{3,4}

You seem agitated and confused. My work here is done.

Now, if you think our eccentric little frog friend has an unusual way of responding to predator threats. Wait 'til you find out how he responds to rival males during the mating season. It's a little something biologists refer to as *tremulation*.⁵

Competition for mating rights is a common theme in the animal kingdom. Very often, males undergo some form of ritualized aggression in order to drive away their competition. The Red-eyed tree frog is no exception. And if there's one thing the male, Red-eyed tree frog knows about, it's mating rituals and the competition thereof. The way he goes about it is a pretty funny affair (pun intended).

It's time to explain the earlier comments about all the shaking going on in Central America. Male RET frogs compete with one another via dueling tremulations. A tremulation is basically a vibration that *isn't* caused by percussion or impact.⁶ In this case it means vibrations transmitted through plants and small branches. Here's how it works (I'll quote a researcher lest you think I'm exaggerating): "the male extends both hind limbs, uplifting his hind end followed by elevating and lowering his hind end repeatedly."⁶ He does this to the tune of around seven times per second for up to two seconds at a time.⁶ He's basically trying to drive away the competition by twerking. I kid you not. You just can't make this stuff up.

Male Red-eyed tree frogs shake their stuff when they sense another male on the same branch.⁶ The goal is to drive away the rival through intimidation.⁶ At the same time, they use the rapid butt-shaking move to attract females. In fact, the twerking is most intense when a female is also nearby.⁶ Occasionally, in an even bolder dance move, a male tremulates with one hind leg hanging off the plant entirely.⁵ Not only

are tremulations conspicuous in terms of vibrations, but they are visually conspicuous as well.⁵ In short, the Red-eyed tree frog really knows how to shake his booty.

I love you with all my butt. I'd say "heart," but
my butt is bigger.

In the late 1800's E. D. Cope cataloged the first scientific record of the Red-eyed tree frog.⁷ Over a century later, KC and the Sunshine Band released a record of their own.⁸ In September 1976, that record, "(Shake, Shake, Shake) Shake Your Booty", hit the charts at #1 on *Billboard Magazine's* Weekly Hot 100.⁹ It's a maddeningly catchy little tune. Tom Breiham writes that the song is "all hook and no chorus," and "drills its simplistic message deep into the brain matter of whoever hears it."⁸ He counted the number of times the word "shake" is repeated. Despite being only three minutes and seven seconds long, the original vocals repeat the word "shake" 96 times!⁸ If you've ever heard the song—even one time—you know it's a . . . well . . . it's a tough song to shake.



The theme of booty shaking paid off well for the Sunshine Band, and apparently it still pays well for the Red-eyed tree frog. Afterall, where do think all those red-eyed little tadpoles come from? Apparently, the critter's startle defense works well too because *Agalychnis callidryas* has been around for a long time. The RETF succeeds in the rainforest

because his survival strategies flat out work. Be advised though: what works for the Red-eyed tree frog does *not* work for network-marketers.

Not one tiny little bit.

There are plenty of things we can do to make prospects uncomfortable. Trust me—I've done pretty much all of 'em. The lesson at hand addresses one of the more common ways. The Red-eyed tree frog provides a fitting counterexample. Do **not** do what he does.

The caution

The last thing you want to do is startle a prospect. Okay, “startle” might be a bit extreme. Think about it like this: the last thing you want to do is catch a prospect off guard. And if we’re not careful, that’s *exactly* what we end up doing; likely without ever realizing it. It’s a common mistake, and all too often it derails the remainder of the conversation, including your offer of opportunity or product.

One of the cardinal rules of prospecting is to do everything you can to make sure the prospect remains comfortable. Uncomfortable *prospects* quickly turn into unwilling *suspects*. They’re unwilling to enter rapport, they’re unwilling to express interest in your offer, and, more than likely, they suspect your motives. They may be interested in exploring opportunities, but they won’t explore opportunities with someone who makes them uncomfortable. Don’t be that person.

I came. I saw. I made it awkward.

The cause

The most effective prospecting conversations flow naturally and smoothly. You don’t have to be perfect; far from it. A little practice with a few key skills is all you need to sponsor some new reps. On the other hand, the more natural your conversations, the more receptive

will be the people to whom you extend offers, *and the more of them you will sponsor.*

The question is: What constitutes a “natural” prospecting conversation? Or . . . in keeping with the counterexample spirit of the lesson: What constitutes an *unnatural* prospecting conversation? An unnatural conversation is one in which your offer catches the prospect off guard because they aren’t prepared to respond to an offer like yours. Bear in mind, it’s the prospect’s perspective that matters, not yours. If they aren’t prepared, you’re responsible for the awkward situation.

Cause #1: Prospect is distracted

One way we catch a person off guard is by asking questions without having their attention. Perhaps they’re participating in the conversation, but they aren’t fully engaged. They might be distracted by performing some other task at the same time you’re talking.

Cause #2: Your offer is out of place

Here’s another way to catch someone off guard . . . Let’s say you’re talking to a person, and then suddenly—with little or no warning—blurt out your offer (aka Magic Question). The wording of your Magic Question may be perfect, but if your question comes across as out-of-place, you run the risk of “startling” your prospect. When that happens, it sends ~~a tremulation~~ an odd vibe, thereby driving away your prospect. Treat your prospecting conversations as non-Non Sequitur Zones.

**That awkward moment when a sentence
doesn’t end the way you think it octopus.**

The solution

Catching a prospect off guard is easy. Thankfully, it’s just as easy to avoid. All it takes is an effective transition. A gentle transition prevents them from being startled. A well-worded transition guarantees you have

the prospect's attention. A subtle transition explains why you're making your offer to them.

The purpose of a transition is to bridge the gap between the start of your conversation and your Magic Question (i.e., your offer). Whereas all



transitions serve as a bridge, some go a step beyond. These transitions are especially powerful because they explain why you're making your offer to that individual (as opposed to someone else).

The application

What follows are example transition phrases that work extremely well. The **bold** portions comprise the transitions. The parts not bolded represent other principles (MAGIC QUESTIONS, etc.). As you read the examples cloud—including the pauses—visualize yourself as the *prospect*. Imagine you're in a brief chat with someone you don't know, when, at some point the other person says:

*Example #1*¹⁰

“That’s really interesting. [pause] Hey, listen, as much as I’m enjoying our chat, I need to jet. Before I go though, is it okay if I ask you a question? [pause and wait for the YES] I know it’s a long shot, but I’m just wondering: Do you ever look at other ways to generate income, I mean, as long as they don’t take too much time?”

Check out the lead-in (“That’s really interesting”). This part puts a period (“.”) in the preceding part of the conversation. It then eases into the next phase of the conversation. Notice how gentle it comes across. In this manner, you avoid “startling” the other person.

This transition also explains why you're asking them: because you're “enjoying the conversation.” This may seem subtle, and it is. It also works. Like a champ.

This same transition also makes sure you have their attention. Notice the ending: “is it okay if I ask you a question?” This part of the phrase (1) raises their curiosity, and (2) ensures they’re paying attention because they realize you’re expecting them to respond.

*Example #2*¹⁰

“Based on the way this conversation is going, I think there might be an unexpected reason we bumped into each other. I could be wrong, but I just have to ask: [pause] Are you at a point in life to explore outside opportunities?”

This transition has the same benefits as the first example. Why are you asking them? Because “based on the way this conversation is going, I think there might be an unexpected reason we bumped into each other.” How do you capture their attention? With the phrase “I just have to ask . . .”

[Author’s note: Only use the “based on the way this conversation...” lead-in if it applies to the situation at hand. Truth and sincerity above all else. Integrity matters.]

These examples convey a great deal of positive and compelling psychology. For the sake of brevity, we’ll have to forego the details in this article. There are plenty of other examples, which also get great results. Good news! You don’t have to understand all the nuances of transitions to put ‘em to work. Pick one that make sense and run with it.

The wrap-up

Deep in the neotropical jungle, there’s a whole lot o’ shakin’ goin’ on. The culprit: *Agalychnis callidryas*, the Red-eyed tree frog, a tiny little critter with a great big message. He shakes his booty to win over the ladies. The bigger his tremulations, the more intense his vibrations, the more effectively he repels the competition, *and* the more attractive he is to nearby females. He literally gives off “vibes” in order to reproduce.

Before he can shake his stuff, though, he first must survive predator attacks. The RETF has a plan for this too. He wears a mix of super bright colors. The colors are so bright as to be out of place in the jungle. And therein lies the brilliance of his plan. He hides his neon colors during the light of day. If disturbed, he quickly snaps open those huge, scarlet red eyes thereby startling the threat. In the momentary confusion that ensues, he leaps away, exposing the rest of his striking coloration, which further confuses the predator.

As a professional prospector, take a cue from the Red-eyed tree frog. Learn from the frog's strategies and then do just the opposite. Don't open the conversation by suddenly injecting the subject of opportunity. Don't startle the prospect with your "bright" ideas of abruptly changing the subject. If you do, you'll catch them off guard. Don't dance around in the conversation trying to figure out how to shake your offer at the prospect as soon as they get "within range." Otherwise, you give off an odd vibe, which drives your prospect away. Far, far away.

Instead, have a little empathy. Bring up the subject of opportunity tenderly and calmly. Use a smart transition to broach the subject with gentleness and subtlety. In so doing, your prospecting conversations flow smoothly and naturally. This is how you attract and win over prospects. It takes a little practice, but it is oh so worth it. Because when you get it right, you may very well hit the charts with a record of your own. Red eyes or a smooth transition—one leads to random reproduction, the other to disciplined duplication. The choice is yours.

Choose wisely because the ripple effect—the impact you end up making—just might shake your booty to the core.

—RM

Note: For more results-getting transitions, words that flat out work, and proven advice regarding the art of gentle persuasion, check out [The Critter Lessons Series](#).

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