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Never Miss An Opportunity To Shut Up

The sale of long term care insurance is a difficult and emotional sales transaction. It absolutely requires that an agent is knowledgeable and prepared.

The "sermonette" for today is one of those old-time straightforward themes: *It is not what you say to your client—it is what you are able to learn from your prospect that will determine your sales success.*

Merely being a good listener is not enough. There are many things that need to be said. You must talk about money—saving money, protecting money, making money, discounting money, inheriting money and, perhaps most important, inflating money. I also hope you will perform at least some basic needs analysis so you can *find the money*.

You will hopefully reach the point in the process when you must talk about policy and benefit structure. As a broker representing the best interests of your client, you know that no one company has a monopoly on the truth, and one size does not fit all.

Therefore, you must talk about comparing companies and products and make recommendations on how best to secure the interests of your clients. Although it is not always a part of the sales process, I would recommend that you talk about the claims process. What happens at the time of claim and the basic mechanics of the claim procedure. Where are claims paid,

to whom, and under what circumstances?

You cannot escape the reality that you will eventually have plenty to say. However if you do not listen first, you will never be given the opportunity. You need to find the story. Ultimately if you cannot find one, you must be prepared to tell your own. There is no greater financial risk that Americans face today. Intellectually they can and will understand the magnitude and probability of this potentially catastrophic risk. However, I humbly submit that this is not how purchase decisions are made.

It is the emotional issues that will free up the dollars to finally make this important purchase. According to HIAA's Market Search 1999, 81 percent of American families have already faced a long term care crisis or expect to face one soon. A MetLife study stated that 22.4 million households contain a family caregiver for someone 50 plus.

The stories are there—stories of denial of choice, financial devastation, family turmoil and professional and personal sacrifice. There are stories about family members' plans delayed, postponed and deferred by the incessant needs of caregiving. There are stories about loss of dignity and freedom to make decisions of even the most basic financial nature. Ask questions and hear the answers.

Find the story and you will find your sale. □