

Overcome.

All hurdles are not created equal...

It's tempting to think that if something is in the way, "it" must be bad & therefore should be vilified as a means to overcome it. But, what if all your hurdles weren't problems?

What are you committed to?

Just this morning, I received a text from a client requesting me to "just" forward image files to her so she could edit and use on Facebook. "What?! How dare she! What a distraction... irritant... obstacle... frustration... something I have to deal with right now that I don't have margin for... doesn't she just get that would erode my business?", I might be tempted to think (hypothetically).

If I'm smart though, I'd say back to my rhetorical self that indeed she doesn't get it. Nor should she. She's a special kind of hurdle - the kind I like because this scenario represents a commitment I have to all my clients. Why not do something surprising that takes care of her & leverages my brand to her followers (like control the upload of a properly edited image that serves her and me?). How I frame that conversation with myself can be the difference between a headache and opportunity.

Fixed and Variable Obstacles

Whenever you run up against friction, ask yourself if it's fixed or variable. Fixed obstacles represent the challenges you face that align with your commitments. This is where you get to become creative. Think of a customer service complaint that gets transformed into an evangelist client because of how you dealt (or missed it because you didn't).

Variable obstacles are hurdles that are in your way that don't align with your commitments in business. Think "there's drama on Facebook, I better stop what I'm doing and go be in the know" (popcorn optional). That's variable resistance that needs to be taken out.

A negotiated response

This quick worksheet can be used in any scenario to ask yourself what kind of hurdle you're dealing with. With the knowledge of whether it's fixed or variable, you should be empowered to negotiate a creative response that aligns with your commitments.

When you come across your next seeming opposition, ask if it's a friend or foe and then treat it accordingly. I hope it's helpful.

- Dane



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Obstacle Worksheet

1. Describe the thing that seems to be in your way? Be detailed & specific. If someone else reads this & they don't get it, you need to drill down more.

2. Is this obstacle potentially connected to a value of you or your company?

3. If you were to waive a magic wand and the obstacle would just go away, what would you or your company have gained or lost? How?

4. If you'd lose nothing meaningful, delete it: it's variable. If it connects with your commitments, claim it: it's fixed and is worth pure gold if you're willing to do the reframing work to transform challenge into opportunity. If you can swing it, you'll be in rare company because doing nothing is easy and easy is what everyone does by default. **Write down what you're committed to cause here:**

BONUS: Serious bonus points if you share any epiphanies on [the blog](#) or want help sorting through your variable and fixed friction.

*For a great articulation of why fixed obstacles are awesome, check out Seth Godin's [The Dip](#).