

Hello and welcome to Rules for Effective Lobbying, a ten-part Advocacy In Practice mini-series. I'm Ray LeBov. I've worked in and around California's Capitol for more than 40 years - first in the Legislature as committee counsel for 17 years, and then as a lobbyist for the past 25 years. I also created and run the Capitol Seminars legislative advocacy training program which is hosted at the McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento, California.

Today we will be discussing some life rules as they apply to lobbying. Some of our rules have been specifically generated in the lobbying context. There are others that are really life rules of more general applicability.

To name three, 1: don't take setbacks personally; 2: when you get frustrated, stop breathe, and think; and 3: RALF your mistakes. Now RALF in this context is an acronym that stands for Recognize, Admit, Learn From, and Forget About.

Lobbying often produces stress stemming from the frustration of things not going how you have hoped or planned for. Sometimes the roadblocks can seem irrational and unfair. Whatever obstacle you may confront is almost certainly not driven by anyone's personal animosity towards you. Beyond not serving any useful purpose, personalizing it is likely misplaced.

It's important not to overreact in a way that leads to taking an action that not only doesn't address the new circumstance in a useful way, but may actually make your situation worse. So each of these three rules provide important guidance of how to respond to unexpectedly difficult situations.

You always need to be solution oriented. Overreacting impairs your ability to focus on finding the right response to a problem. I'm reminded of an ancient Chinese proverb that provides wonderful guidance. "It's better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness."

We all know people whose response to mistakes is to self-flagellate. That serves no useful purpose. We all make mistakes. It's part of the human condition. Instead of beating yourself up, use the occasion of a mistake as a positive by following our RALF rule. Again, RALF stands for Recognize, Admit, Learn From, and Forget About. Not only will this help prevent you from repeating it, but along with the other life rules we've cited, it will help keep you from unwisely misplacing your focus.

That's all for this episode of Rules of Effective Lobbying. Tune in next time. Until then, I'm Ray LeBov and thanks for tuning in.