



## [The Key To Avoiding Crappy Clients: The Riot Act](#)

### Three Month Vacation Podcast

Sean D'Souza:

The year was 1998, I think 1999, and I had a massive headache. The reason for my headache was that I wasn't being paid on time. Just to get paid, I had to follow up several times and then I was lucky if I got the full amount. These are clients that drive you crazy and often the question is, what are you going to do with clients like these? Whose fault is it?

Our natural instinct is to say that it's the clients' fault. Really, is it? I think it's just our fault. Why is it our fault? How do we decide when do we get rid of the client? Shall we get rid of them now? Should we get rid of them 6 months from now?

We're not very sure but The Riot Act puts everything into perspective and it saves you from the trouble that I had. I not only had headaches but I had hypertension and all kinds of things and I was not even 30 years old. If you want to avoid that kind of thing, you will need to know how to use The Riot Act.

There are 3 parts to The Riot Act. The first is the form or the barrier, the second is the philosophy, and the third is the right to fire the client. Let's see how this all pans out.

The first part of The Riot Act is the barrier. Without the barrier, without the form, nothing happens. When I started my career, I started out as a cartoonist and the clients always have the upper hand. I was just a teenager out of university; in fact I was still in university.

At that point in time, the newspapers would tell me what to do and they would decide when they had to pay me and so I would spend a lot of time in this follow-up just trying to get my payments, just trying to get the jobs, just trying to just go crazy doing what I thought should have been easy and pleasurable. You get into this rock you think that there is never going to be another way.



Then one day, I was sitting at the dentist and the dentist gave me a form. Here I was doing a transaction. I was going to pay this guy to drill my teeth. He wasn't going to do it until the form was filled.

Later, I went to a yoga class that is several years later. They weren't going to allow me to the yoga class until I filled in this form and agreed to sit in a number of classes. I thought, "Wow, this is really cool."

What's happening here is the expectations are being set right at the start. The barriers are being put in place. I thought, "This is incredibly powerful. I wonder if I could use this in our business."

As you know, [Psychotactics](#) is mostly about books. It's about workshops. It's about training. What we had at that point in time was a consulting program. Because I live in New Zealand, this consulting is done by a telephone. Still, I got people to fill in the form. They had to fill in our big form and then get back and then we went ahead with the consulting.

The same applied with the protege program. This was a year-long program. Again, they had to fill in a form. Because it was more detailed, more intensive as it were, they also had to go through a 45-minute interview.

Think about it for a second. You are sitting there and you're about to take money from a client but you're putting them for a barrier. Would they agree to such a barrier? The answer is yes. When you look around you, most of the successful businesses have some contracted place.

At that point in time, we only had a single document, a book called The Brain Audit and so we made that our biggest barrier. If you wanted to go to workshop, you had to read The Brain Audit. If you wanted to join our membership at 5000bc.com, again, you had to read [The Brain Audit](#). You had to buy, you had to read it.

At that point in time, I was still doing one-on-one consulting. What we had to do was put together a barrier and the simplest barrier of all is a form. You get the client to sit down and go through a whole bunch of questions.



They answer the questions. They qualify themselves and that becomes the first barrier. That's it that dawned for the relationship.

You may not want to have a form. You might want to have some other kind of barrier in place. Maybe they have to read through a couple of pages of something. Maybe they have to listen to an audio. It doesn't matter what it is. Having the barrier in place gets the client to qualify themselves and that is the first step towards getting rid of that headache.

You know what's the sad thing? The sad thing is that we haven't always taken our own advice and sometimes we've let the barrier down. For instance, once we were having the workshop in Washington DC and we said, "It's The Brain Audit workshop. Everyone has read The Brain Audit. They're going to be here and we don't really need to have any barrier in place," and we let that barrier down.

Someone slipped through the net. She was just disruptive, asking all sorts of crazy questions, not participating in the group sessions properly. She drove us crazy. We had to send her home after a couple of days. This is not something you want to do in the middle of a workshop. The first step in your Riot Act is to make sure that, "Hey, you've got a barrier."

This takes us to the second step which is the philosophy. Do they buy in to your philosophy? Do you know if they're buying in to your philosophy? Because if they don't buy in to your philosophy, it's getting into relationship where you don't the other person at all.

Second thought, philosophy. What is so important about the philosophy and how do you get this across? You don't have to write a book or have something sophisticated about your philosophy. Most of our philosophy is embedded within our documents, whether it's a report or a book or an audio. The philosophy is there. People have to listen to something specific before they join.

This is the trickiest thing to achieve when you're in consulting, because the client is very eager to get ahead with the job and it almost seems like you're slowing them down. Getting them to read even a couple of pages or listen to something is very critical. Maybe you get them to read just a few pages of your website or maybe a single page.



Having that philosophy in place makes a big difference. For instance, ours is a 3-month vacation philosophy, which is that we work for 9 months and then, of course, we go out for 3 months in the year.

This doesn't fit really well with clients if they don't know this right at the start. Let's supposing you're a member of [5000bc](#) and you join and you think, "Sean is going to be there right through the year."

I'm not and I go on vacation for a whole month at a time and should I go back into 5000bc I get thrown out. I get thrown out by my own members because they go, "You're supposed to be on vacation."

This is a complete fit of philosophy. They understand where you're coming from. You understand what you need to do. Unless you get this message across right at the start, you're going to run into a clash and you're going to lose. The client is going to get upset with you. They're going to recall your money. They're going to give you all kinds of trouble because they feel that they're in the right. You haven't let them know right in the start what your philosophy is all about.

Let's take an example of this yoga class that I visited in South India. Their philosophy is very simple. You had to be part of that yoga class for a week, not for a few days but for a week. You had to be vegetarian for the entire week. You had to spend an hour or so in meditation every day. That was part of their philosophy. If you didn't agree with that, then you couldn't be part of their group.

When we do our courses, which is training which is different from a service like a yoga class, we do something similar. The philosophy is about tiny increments. It's not about big jumps. It's not about instant success. It's not about get anywhere quickly. It's about very, very tiny increments.

For this to happen, the clients have to show up every day. They have to agree to this philosophy. They have to agree that they're going to be there 5 days a week going forward step by step as we go through the whole minefield of information and getting things implemented.



In a way, a philosophy is your way of life but it's also the rules that you put together. While it's quite easy to put it, you're offering a service or training. It probably is a lot harder when you're selling a product. What do you supposed to do if you're selling shampoo or soap? There is a philosophy.

If you go to this site at EcoStore.co.nz, you will find that the owner put together a philosophy and you can see the philosophy in the website. It's very clear.

They do not want anything to do with chemicals so all their soaps, all their products are made without any chemicals whatsoever. They spend thousands or tens of thousands or probably hundreds of thousands of dollars to make sure that it's absolutely pure that it doesn't remove the oils from your skin that it doesn't affect you in any way. They don't say it but I think you could drink some of their soap. That's their philosophy.

Your philosophy is the core of your business. It is why you started out in the first place. It is everything. If the client doesn't get a complete dose of this philosophy, they don't know what do you stand for. You get into this relationship not knowing how it's going to work out. That's not a good thing. You want to make sure that the client reads or listens to this philosophy and make it short. Don't punish them.

This takes us to the third part, which is the right to fire the client. You probably don't think of firing the client very much, do you? The client pays your bills, sends you on vacation. They're there for your benefit and yet you need to fire the client.

When most of us start up in a relationship, we don't outline the exit plan. In most cases, especially in personal relationships, it's not necessary. In a business relationship, it's very important that you have some exit plan in place.



In the very first meeting, what you need to do with the client is sitting down and tell them that they have the right to fire you. They have the right to fire you if you don't meet with the obligations, the specifications of the contract. Then you tell them that you in turn had the right to fire them if they don't meet up with the scheduled payments, if they don't behave like normal people should.

When we do this, we are very clear about the fact that it's an equal agreement. Nothing is ever equal that's always the shift-in power balance but even so, you're not making it so unequal that it causes you trouble. It also sets the benchmarks so you know that, "Hey, at this point in time, I have to get paid. If I don't get paid, we're walking. We're firing you."

If I had these systems in place when I first started out, it would have saved me a lot of grief. In a lot of cases, I didn't get paid anyway. In other cases, the trouble of trying to recover the money, the hassle of having to deal with clients that suddenly reduced the font size from 17 to 3, it was not worth the trouble. When you set this whole agenda in place, it makes it much easier for the relationship to continue and to be very, very respectful.

If you were just selling a product online or a physical product, yes it cost you money but it's not as damaging as training or consulting. Especially if you're in training or consulting, you want to make sure that you have this Riot Act in place. Let's go over the 3 parts of The Riot Act.

The first part of The Riot Act was simply the barrier. You've got to have some barrier in place. This could be that they have to read a booklet or a book or filling a form or do something.

The second step is simply to have a philosophy. This might be a short document. It might be a single page. The client has to know your philosophy and, of course, you have to know your philosophy and put it down so that they agree with it.



Finally, you have to make sure that right at the start the client knows that they can fire you but you can fire them. This sets a benchmark, were you going to paid at this time, you're going to get this at that time. It sets this whole relationship right at the start and prevents all the hassle that most of us have had at some point with the other.

We've run [Psychotactics](#) for almost 13 or 14 years now and we've had only 3 or 4 clients that have been toxic clients the whole time. That's a very long time to not have clients that are real thing.

The reason for that is very simple. For most of our products, our services and whenever we do consulting, we make sure that we have the system in place. You'll find that work is an absolutely pleasure, which is the way it should be, not being pushed around all the time by someone else, so put The Riot Act in place.

The simplest thing you can do today that's the one thing that you can do today. What is it? The one thing that you can do today is put a barrier in place. Even if you don't have your philosophy in place, even if you don't have the guts to go up to the client and say, "We're going to fire you," have the barrier. Small barrier, big barrier, whatever barrier, have a barrier in place. When the client gets over their barrier, they qualify themselves and that makes the big difference.

With that, we are shuffling towards the end of this podcast. I just want to tell you, if you want more goodies, which are not available in the website, you can go to [psychotactics.com/magic](http://psychotactics.com/magic).

On another note, we're having a workshop on information products. It's interesting but a lot of the stuff that you see free on the internet has very little value because there's so much free stuff. It is more efficient to get clients through workshops or training, something that they pay for and yet structuring a book or a workshop or a webinar is critical, how you make it so exciting that people want to come back time and time again and then buy more stuff from you.



That's what we're going to cover in the [information products workshop](#) where we show you how to reduce the amount of information and yet get clients to come back. This is nothing sleazy. It's what we really need at this point in time in our history. That's happening in the first week of May 2015. We'll have more details on the podcast and on the website, so be part of the [newsletter at psychotactics.com](#).

Finally, I'm writing a book on pricing, yes pricing, and how to get better prices without losing customers. That's it for now. That's me, Sean D'Souza saying bye from the [Three-Month Vacation podcast](#) and psychotactics.com. If you haven't already gone to Psychotactics, go there today. Bye for now.

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