



# The Heart of Selling Interview

**Tad Hargrave**  
of Marketing for Hippies

Interviews **Heart of Business** founder **Mark Silver**

For more information on these bearded gentlemen check out

[heartofbusiness.com](http://heartofbusiness.com) for Mark Silver & [marketingforhippies.com](http://marketingforhippies.com) for Tad Hargrave



Tad Hargrave - Marketing for Hippies



Mark Silver - Heart of Business

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# The Interview

**Tad Hargrave:** Hey there! This is Tad Hargrave. I'm here with Mark Silver, and we're talking about selling for holistic practitioners. I wanted to have a conversation with Mark about this topic, because I think he's really got some important things to say.

This is an area where I see many holistic practitioners struggle. There are really three things that we're going to talk about.

Number one, when you have an **initial conversation** with somebody, and you think that you might be able to help them, how does that conversation go? How does it flow? What do you talk about? What don't you talk about?

Number two, if they seem interested, if they're leaning in and it seems like it could really be a fit, how does that **transition from you talking about it to them actually booking an appointment** with you?

Third, how do you get them to come back and **rebook** with you. Often, those conversations tend to be really awkward for both parties initially.

When it gets to the point of asking them to book the initial session, it can get awkward. After a session, when you're just standing there like, "So, would you like to rebook a session?" it can just not flow as easily as it could.

So, Mark, thanks for joining us.

**Mark Silver:** Absolutely. Thanks, Tad.

# The First Conversation

**Tad:** So let's start with the initial conversation. You're at a cocktail party, and you meet somebody, and you start a conversation. I'm curious about what your sense is of the blunders. Where does that conversation go wrong?

**Mark:** That's a really good example because, believe me, I've blundered with that myself many, many times. Even though I teach business, I still want folks to know that I'm trained as a spiritual healer.

I went through a three-year training in a Sufi healing school. I consider myself very much a holistic practitioner in many ways, although I don't have the same kind of medical or physical body training that, for example, my acupuncturist, who saved me today from getting full getting full-blown sick.

But it's definitely a place where people struggle. The biggest thing that trips people up in those situations is that we mistake someone's interest with them being prepared to actually book a session.

Let me explain this a little more. One of the reasons that selling and sales has gotten such a bad name is because so many people do it without any sense of what I call "appropriate intimacy."

Let me give you a broad context for where I see selling and sales fitting into the whole marketing scheme. I think it's really helpful to see it this way because a lot of times the concept is, "*Oh somebody's interested. I talked to them in some special, magical way, or the divine intervenes, or something happens, and Boom! They're a client.*" There are a few more steps to it.

# The Three Journeys

**Mark:** I see marketing happening in three journeys.

**The first journey** is where somebody is out in the world; they're a stranger to you and your business and what you do, and they've got a problem that they're facing.

For holistic practitioners, it's often a health problem, and it's a serious health problem. Or it's some kind of a relationship issue. There's something that's fairly consequential in their life, and they're struggling to deal with it.

They encounter your business. They encounter you by meeting you at a party, coming across your website, they meet a client of yours, or something. There's some kind of meeting there.

That initial contact is the first journey contact. What I mean by that is that they're not necessarily ready to buy at that point. They're just saying, "*Is this person my tribe? Do I fit with them? Do they fit my values? Are they offering something that could be helpful to me? Do I feel comfortable with them? Do I feel like what they're offering makes sense for what I'm struggling with?*"

There's a kind of initial window-shopping that happens. "*Are you my people?*" is the essential question. If the answer to that question is yes, then they enter what I call the second journey of marketing.

**The second journey** of marketing is when there is some kind of ongoing contact and relationship building whether it's conscious or unconscious, over time until you reach such a point where the timing is right, and the resources, meaning the person's money situation, are right. The struggle that they are having with their situation, with the problem that they are trying to address, the timing becomes right.

You enter a moment that I call the "sacred moment" of the sale, and that's near the end of the second journey. The second journey ends when someone becomes a client, and they decide "*Yes, I want a deeper, more intimate relationship with this person. I'm willing to give and receive with this business person,*" meaning receive help and give money or barter, however you're handling that.

**The third journey** is when you "wow" a client to the point that they want to tell other people about you, and they help other people enter your first and second journeys, and you give them structures and support on how to do that effectively.

I think it's really important to highlight this: the sales conversation doesn't happen in a vacuum. It happens when both people are ready for it.

When you first meet someone, they can, in one conversation, pass through the first journey into the second journey. This happens. Serendipitously we meet people that are just perfect for us, the timing is just right, and they go, “*Yeah, I’m ready to become your client.*”

But if you depend on that dynamic happening for *all* of your clients, you probably won’t have a full practice.

There are very few exceptions to that where there are people who for some reason seem like golden children and have full practices, but the vast majority of people, if they’re really going to be effective, end up employing this first and second journey structure in some fashion. Does that make sense?

**Tad:** Yeah, that’s true.

**Mark:** My acupuncturist is part of a clinic here in Portland, and they send out a newsletter on a regular basis. So anybody who’s a client or is interested in what they’re offering, and is on that newsletter list is reminded of the clinic over, and over, and over again.

Then flu season hits or something happens in their life, and they just got the newsletter in the last week, and they’re like, “*Oh yeah, I’m going to call the clinic and book an appointment.*”

That’s a conscious version of the second journey. Sometimes it happens unconsciously where they’ll just run into you in a number of different places, or a number of people may mention your name randomly, with the divine is helping your journey along in that way, or the second journey is happening but is not connected to any particular practitioner, meaning that they meet you, and they go, “*Oh yeah, acupuncture or Reiki or whatever. That’s cool. I like what you’re saying.*”

Then they meet another Reiki practitioner, and they meet another Reiki practitioner. And the sixth or seventh or tenth or twelfth time they meet somebody a year later, they say, “*Okay, now I’m ready.*”

But it’s not you. It’s the twelfth person that they stumbled upon.

**Tad:** That’s interesting. I feel like it opens up a few loops. One is I’m wondering about your thoughts on that first journey, the question of “*Are you the right people?*” and how we would engage in that and relate to that.

Something I heard you talk about a while ago that I want to dive into is the contrast of **safety versus attraction**, which feels like a really important part.

Could you talk about that distinction?

**Mark:** I think it is a really important distinction. I’m speaking from the perspective of a

spiritual healer, so my experience in the world is that love is a spiritual quality.

It's something that is present in everything. Love is something that is very available. When we're talking about attraction in general or in business, we're talking about love. That's really what we're talking about.

We're talking about hearts connecting in whatever way that it looks, whether it's an intimate relationship, a business relationship, a friendship, or a community. We're really talking about love.

When you talk about love, you can't manufacture love. So, where a lot of practitioners misstep is by taking on some of the language or attitudes of some of these marketers whose methods I don't agree with so much, where you're 'trying to be attractive'; you're trying to attract the right clients.

That becomes an exercise in futility because you're trying to manufacture love. You can receive love, you can experience love, you can share love, you can give love, but you can't create it.

So, love is something that happens in the heart, and it's something that you can do lots with internally, in terms of building up your capacity for love. However, when we encounter love, what tends to happen?

Let's say you feel attracted to somebody on a relationship level or somebody sees a business or a practitioner, and they're interested in that. The first things that go through your mind are, "*Am I going to get my heart broken? What if it goes wrong? Is this person going to hurt me?*"

Those are the worries of the ego because the heart, of course, is longing for love, and the ego is longing for control; it wants **safety**.

The job of your heart and your spiritual presence is to bring love, and the job of your marketing is to make it safe, to bring safety to the right people so that they feel safe enough to be able heed the call of love.

**Tad:** What you all just heard on this call was the sound of my mind being blown. I love that.

So, what is it that people do that thwarts that safety? One of the things I'm hearing that I very much resonate with this is emulating the marketing gurus. I have a client in Calgary who went to the course of one of these people.

If I named the marketer, most people would know. They get big rooms packed, there are a lot of sales, a lot of hype in its facilitation-style. She learned that style, went to that train-the-trainer type program, and ended up doing that presentation to her friends, and it seemed so off.



**Mark:** I can only imagine how painful that was.

**Tad:** It was so painful for everybody, but she thought, “*This is what I have to do; this is how you market. This is what he told me I had to do.*”

Maybe it would have worked for someone else. For her, it just wasn’t a fit. I’m curious about what else you feel like can break that safety.

**Mark:** I think that anything that can break that safety is usually related to the neediness of the marketer, the practitioner, the person doing it.

One of the core teachings that we work with at the Heart of Business when we’re not doing the actual practical business stuff when we are working with the spiritual side of things is that we work with neediness.

The truth is that we’re all needy. I’ve really worked hard with myself and my clients to come into deep acceptance, intimacy, and friendship with our neediness, just a deep acceptance of the neediness that we have.

*“True compassion requires us to attend to our humanity, to come to a deep acceptance of our life as it is. It requires us to come into right relationship with that which is most human in ourselves.”*

- **Rachel Naomi Remen**

When we can accept the neediness, what we can do is bring that neediness to where it can actually be nourished. In a spiritual sense, we can connect with our heart.

We can say, “*Wow, I’m feeling so needy for safety.*” I’ve been mentioning safety, but maybe it’s provision; you need clients or money, so you get scared. Or you’re needing approval, or you’re needing love, or you’re needing acceptance. Maybe you’re saying, “*I hope somebody hires me and comes in for a session, or I’m going to feel rejected.*”

When these kinds of emotions come up, and they’re not handled in the heart, where they really need to be handled, but instead they’re handled in an attempt to manipulate, it’s disastrous.

Your friend, your client is one example of how that can come out. Another one can come out where people are really aware that that scenario is a possibility, so they don’t market at all, don’t do sales at all, and they’re really quiet.

That definitely comes into play a lot in that third part that we’re wanting to get to around getting people to rebook. People will get really quiet, or they won’t make any recommendations and let clients go away without asking them to rebook.

It really traps people in any number of ways. Different people will obviously make it look differently, but the core issue is the unexamined and undernourished neediness in the heart.

**Tad:** That's interesting. While you were talking, I was like, "*That was my high school dating life.*"

Where that shows up for me is when a practitioner is talking to somebody, and they see that this person has a problem that they can solve. They can do something. There can be this "leaning in" that happens when people aren't in a really good relationship with that neediness that you're talking about.

There can be a kind of overeager leaping-forward.

**Mark:** You lose sight of the client. You start to focus on what you can do, and you lose sight of what's actually going on for the person.

**Tad:** It's like people almost have to assert their boundaries. I think of it very much like dating. Guy meets a girl at a café and she's thinking, "*I'm curious about him. I could be open to this.*"

But he takes it as, "*She's totally ready to go steady.*" Then he starts acting this certain way, and she's like "*Wow! That's not what I signed up for!*"

I see that in sales conversations where it's like people get a whiff of the possibility, and they leap, they jump. It comes across sometimes as pressure or pushing too much. My friend Ari Galper talks about this as 'hopium'. Getting hooked on false hopes. And it can be a kind of addiction.

I heard somebody use a metaphor once where you're like an archer who's trying to hit the bull's-eye, but you're looking at the trophy.

You're almost guaranteed not to hit the bull's-eye, and therefore not get the trophy.

**Mark:** That's a great analogy. The answer to this is to have some kind of second journey marketing set-up. People who are familiar with you, Tad, know how much written content you have.

I, too, have a lot of **written content**. A lot of other people create **audio**. When you meet somebody for the first time, instead of saying, "*Why don't you come in for an appointment with me?*" which can be a kind of painful interaction, you can say without any attachment, "*Hey, I really hear what you're struggling with. I wrote an article on that. Why don't I send that to you so you can see if it's helpful for you?*"

There's no pressure, there's no sales, and there's no commitment; there's just the generosity of giving. That's really the hallmark of the second journey of marketing: a generosity, a sharing of resources, a giving to the person in a way that's sustainable for you.

You're not giving away a free session; you're giving away something you've already

written that you can give away a thousand times without it costing you more time.

**Tad:** That sounds like part of the shift from the second journey to the third, that “sacred moment”. You’re giving and giving, and they’re okay to receive, but when it shifts, they become open to giving back to you.

**Mark:** It’s like a deeper level of relationship. I call it the “sacred moment” because there’s a deepening of intimacy, there’s a sacredness about that.

It switches from a one-way relationship to a two-way relationship where both sides are willing to connect.

I make the argument that this is true in every business relationship, or at least the potential is there. It’s especially true for holistic practitioners because of the intense vulnerability people have around their health and their well-being.

**Tad:** So, to recap the first journey - It’s that initial connection or conversation. You’re coming from a place of curiosity, asking about the situation.

At the end of that there’s a sense of some basic safety and connection. There’s some warmth there.

Then there’s the invitation to go on the second journey, which is maybe when you send them something. What other things could that look like? It might look like an **article** you might send them. What else could it look like?

**Mark:** In my mind, there’s not a huge range in terms of what the structure looks like because you want regular contact with someone in a way that’s useful.

The way to do it to make it useful is to have some kind of content that’s being sent, something in **written, audio, or video** format that can either be **mailed** to them or sent over the **Internet**. I know some people still do mail things.

It can seem like a lot of work to do this. I can imagine a lot of groans from people going, “*I don’t want to do this.*”

If you’re already struggling with the sales conversation, and it’s already a painful place for you, I just want to give the inspiration that starting to learn how to articulate, write, and put out content, even if a million other people are out there doing it better, the truth is that there’s a certain uniqueness that we all have.

My wife and I have been together for 15 years, and there are millions of other people in the world, but we have a unique connection because of our uniqueness.

It’s the same with your clients. They want you; they don’t want just random “whatever.” Even if other people have written about it yourself, in your own personality and your own way, it’s about creating safety. It’s not just about the information; it’s

about them getting to know and trust you.

Let me tell you, this is how you get out of feast or famine in your practice. What I think is vastly underestimated in marketing and business is how long it takes someone to make a significant purchasing decision.

Especially with health and this kind of thing, it can take somebody weeks, months, or sometimes years before they're really willing to come out of denial and face a problem that they're having and get it treated.

If you are able to maintain an **e-mail list**, a **blog**, or something that has dozens, or even hundreds or a thousand eventually on that list, there will always be a certain number of people on that list who are in the right timing; the timing is right for them.

When you have enough of those people always being reminded of your presence and always receiving your generosity, then you have a steady flow of clients.

The feast or famine, or ups and downs goes away because you have that list. You probably have a waiting list. The cycles of business are defined by the length of the waiting list, not whether your treatment room is full or not.

**Tad:** That's interesting. In Calgary, I was talking to a mortgage broker, and he was telling me that, on average, people in Calgary refinance their homes every five years. Guess what percent of people go back to their original mortgage broker.

**Mark:** How many?

**Tad:** Two percent. It's because they don't stay in touch. You sit down and go over the mortgage, and that's it. You never hear from them again.

There is no 'stay-in-touch' marketing plan.

One of my clients shared this experience with me:

*"I called someone a MIRACULOUS MASSAGE THERAPIST who was a client of mine but I was not a client of hers. I had a most incredible set of knots under my left shoulder blade and had no one to acupressure them into submission. I called her in desperation, willing to cancel anyone, to get the problem under control. I could not sleep, could not hold my arms up due to the pain. She graciously treated me like a regular, I felt warm, comforted, she fixed my pain and I felt so calm & pain free. I drove away from her house, never heard from her again, did not receive a follow up call, note, e-mail or whatever. I left her a generous tip beyond her charges because she took an hour of her time to help me...I did not receive a regular therapist in return. Did I do something wrong? I felt insecure for calling her but I was so in PAIN that I was willing to do anything, pay any money. I was ignored...I have referred many people to her but I have never had an acknowledgment from her "yay" or "nay"...I feel deserted and I WAS prepared to book ahead, be a 'regular'."*

Hearing you talk, it was like I was hearing myself talk. This whole idea of stay-in-touch marketing is so important.

There are so many different ways it can happen, but not too many. It could be an e-mail list. You can set up **auto responders** where there's a sort of e-course that they get. It happens automatically. You can do it every week, every month, or whenever you want to send something out.

It could be video. If you're into that and you have the technology, you can record quick little videos that you can send out to share with people. You're going to want it to be about three to five minutes long.

**Mark:** I know a naturopathic doctor who does that. He's built a list of several hundred people.

**Tad:** That's great. I've actually been wanting to do that myself. I probably will get on and send some video.

I want to make a plug for video for holistic practitioners because so much of the safety is them getting a vibe of you. They get such an easy vibe from video. It's much easier to get a sense of a person, which will speed up the process of decision-making because they feel safer and know you better.

It could also be in-person things if you work locally. It can be a **regular talk, workshop, a full-moon gathering** that you do all the time, or any kind of ongoing thing that's sort of a drop-in so people can just come by.

It can be a great way to stay in touch with people. If you have "favorite clients," maybe you could host certain things for them. There are a lot of ways to stay in touch.

You've got to make it a priority. How do I keep building this relationship? How do I keep giving? How do I keep contributing?

I love the whole generosity thing; that's what I've found with pay-what-you-can. It's so steeped in generosity, and the idea that if you give and give and give, and then give people their space, they give back.

**Mark:** They do. We have a natural desire to give, be of service, and be generous. So, when we're given to authentically, there is that response in the human heart to want to give back.

I just want to emphasize that if this seems like a lot of work to enroll a client or just have a patient come in, this is actually what takes all the work out of it.

There's an initial learning curve while you're still learning how to do it or get it set up, and it can seem overwhelming. You may be like, "*I would rather be treating people.*"

But once you get in the flow of doing this and it happens, it becomes quite natural. It takes up less and less time as there becomes an ease to it.

I keep wanting to say this: in the beginning it seems insane because you have only five or ten people on the list, but if you add people to the list with no additional effort on your part, and you're reaching those people, it makes it so much easier, and what's more, it's the piece that's missing from the sales conversation. This is what makes the sales conversation easy, easy, easy.

There are still some pieces that make it helpful, and we'll get to that, but it makes it easy. I can't tell you how often it happens to me. I have people e-mail or call and say, "*I've been on your e-mail list for six months, or a year, or two years sometimes, and I feel like I know you.*"

The conversation is not about, "*Who are you? Tell me what you got*" with this defensiveness, or "*Prove it to me that you can help me.*"

It's more like a conversation between friends with a really sincere question of "*Is this right for me?*" If it is right for them, there's hardly any selling that happens at that point.

**Tad:**

I've had that happen. I led a workshop for holistic practitioners in Calgary, and people came up to me and said, "*Can I hire you? Can I work with you?*" It was really interesting how they were almost asking for permission. I find the same thing.

To distill this, I think where people get stressed about the sales conversation is seeing it in isolation, seeing it without that background, safety, and relationship.

They think you just meet someone, and there are just magic words that you say to make them like, "*Sign me up for a series of ten sessions.*" It might happen. Don't count on it happening.

You've got to take time and care to build a relationship. I remember somebody talking about how, with this kind of long-term stuff, in the beginning, you're putting in ten units of effort and getting one unit of reward. It seems so messed up and unfair.

But if you keep working at it, eventually you put in one unit of effort, and you get one unit of reward, so it's fair.

But if you keep working at it still, you put in one unit of effort and you get ten units of reward, but you need the foundation. In this case, that foundation is the infrastructure of staying in touch and building that relationship of trust.

Then that gets us to the point where there is that "sacred moment" where there's some openness and right timing. It's hard to screw up at this point, but it can be done. Where are the traps on that?

**Mark:**

There are a few traps. I should mention that we spend an entire two days on a **Sacred Moment Seminar**. Every year we teach this because it's worth putting under a microscope and thinking through these different pieces. It's not that easy to screw up.

A lot of times you do it naturally, but each of the pieces is worth giving some time and attention to if you really want to bring some consciousness and heart to them.

One of the things that can mess you up is if the offer that you're making doesn't look like what they're needing. Like when you said how practitioners saying, "*Come in for a ten session series.*" My experience is actually that most practitioners aren't even thinking like that. They're thinking, "*Come in for a session.*"

The thing is that they don't want a session; they want their health. You need to think, "*If somebody is struggling with X problem, what's really going to help them? Are they going to get a session?*"

You can tell them you've got this program or course of treatments. You can call it whatever you want. It doesn't have to be a hype-y name, but it can be something to hold it together that helps people understand that you're going to be there with them through the journey.

They won't be like, "*I don't know how deep I'm getting into this.*" This is a whole thing around crafting your offer so that they can really trust that it's going to get them where they want to go, instead of being like, "*This is just another session that I have to spend money on.*"

My wife had a chronic illness for ten years, and it was a great relief to meet someone who was competent, who we had trust in, and who had all of that other stuff in place.

They said "*This is going to take a year to eighteen months to really work with. This is what we're looking at.*" We talked about the whole course of treatment. That was so much more reassuring and trust-building than just saying, "*Come in for a session.*"

We were like, "*This person actually knows what they're talking about.*"

This one piece is just thinking, "*What does the offer look like from their point of view?*"

# Pricing

**Mark:** Another piece that we spend a fair amount of time on is the pricing. I love the pay-what-you-can economy and that approach to things. If you are going to have a fixed price and work with it, it's really good to get clear on what that price is in a way that feels really good in your heart.

We do a whole intuitive heart-centered exercise around what the right price is, what price resonates with you. If you're comparing your price to somebody else's price, and you're thinking it's too high or low, it's much better to choose a price that you're really comfortable with, even if it's a little lower than you think it should be, than to choose a higher price and be uncentered, ungrounded, and unable to speak the price without stuttering.

When someone asks you the price, saying, "It's \$60" is much better than "It's... *uh, well... it's \$90.*" That can really throw some of their confidence in you; it breaks down that safety piece.

When you are clear with your price and get comfortable with it, it doesn't take too long to get comfortable saying a price that may be a little higher that is sustainable for you and your family.

The price is a piece. Notice that we're still talking about being prepared for the conversation. The conversation itself is really easy if you're prepared for it.

**Tad:** Number one: we're talking about **packaging**, thinking about things in terms of **programs** versus **services**.

Number two: we're talking about pricing. The term you I heard you use once was a 'resonant price'. I love that term.

**Mark:** It's a beautiful exercise when you do it in a class like the one I taught yesterday. I had a group of people, and somebody said, "*My stomach hurts if I think about charging this low a price, and I freak out if I think of charging this high a price.*" We go through the scale.

We had maybe a hundred people on the call, and we heard from close to a dozen people. Everybody ended up around the same price. We were just intuitively getting that same hit. That's a beautiful exercise to work with, to find that resonant price.

If you're listening to this, and we believe the same things, you and I both know that when we do our best work, it's a gift that comes through us. A lot of times the issue that we have around pricing or charging isn't a question of whether it's too high or too low, but a question of *'how you can charge for it at all?'*

It feels like such a gift. It feels like, one, I'm having such an amazing time doing it, and



two, it just kind of comes through me when I'm in that surrendered place with a patient.

How can I charge for it? It feels a little gross to charge for it when it's not mine in the first place. The point that I'd like to bring up around this is that you're right. You can't charge for it.

You cannot 'charge' for that. In fact, you aren't charging for it because a sale is not a transaction. The English word "sale" originates with the Old Norse word *selgen*, which originally meant to give to someone voluntarily in response to a request.

*"Can I have that?"*

*"Sure! You can have it!"*

Then you give them whatever they ask for. That's *selgen*; that's selling. That's the origin of the word "sell".

The client comes to you really needy, they're asking for help, and the help pours through you. That's selling.

I invite people to shift from thinking about 'charging' money to 'accepting' it. The reason why you need to accept money for it is because you are not God. Let me tell you that there's a piece of unconscious arrogance that comes in when we think that we can help, but we don't need help. It's that neediness that I was talking about before.

When the client comes before you needy and vulnerable and you become a doorway to the divine, your heart opens up, and they are helped, you get to be human also.

You get to show up as a human being with your own needs for yourself, for you family, or your own provision, and they have whatever they've been given. The divine has supported them in whatever way they are supported; they get paid from their job or wherever they get their money from.

**Tad:** Right. They've been given that money; it's come to them. That money is not theirs either. Money doesn't belong to any of us. It flows through our lives. Our only question is how to allocate it. A dear mentor of mine, Lynne Twist, has the most beautiful book called "The Soul of Money" that I can't recommend highly enough. It's not their money. Like healing comes through you, money comes through their life.

**Mark:** Right. They become the doorway to the divine for **you** in your neediness, and that's where the resonant price comes from.

It's not because it's "worth" a certain amount. I dropped the words "worth" and "value" out of this entirely. Are you able to surrender and be humble enough and receive the help that you need in the same way your client was humble enough to

receive the help that you gave them?

**Tad:** I'm getting shivers listening to you. I've been having the same thought process.

I don't know if you saw it on Facebook today, but I posted this thing called "The 12 Toxic Myths Of Wealth: The Personal Growth Industry's Bankrupt Notions of Prosperity." Did you see it yet?

**Mark:** I have not. I've been on Twitter, but I haven't been on Facebook yet today.

**Tad:** I put this article on Facebook about the whole idea of money and how all these systems revolve around money, and how crazy it's become. One of the biggest things I see is this whole idea of self-worth. We even talk about 'financial worth'. We're *really* talking about our net financial *assets*, but it gets tied into a sense of *worth*.

We're exhorted to "*Charge What We Deserve*". There's a lot of this notion of deserving and value, a sort of entitlement that gets tied into pricing.

When I talk to people, I find myself inviting them to sort of step back and just ask themselves, "How can this be a win-win thing?" Yes, you want to support other people, but are you open to being supported, too?

Are you open to figuring out a way to sustain yourself by doing this? We're so busy taking care of other people that someone else will make sure that our needs are met, that we're taken care of in the process.

**Mark:** I think that the whole piece of value and worth are just red herrings. I used to try to work with people in the very beginning with issues around self-worth. I feel that they were sometimes moderately successful, but they were never really, really deeply helpful.

I just tossed out that entire concept. Instead, I've found that it's much more helpful to find this place of neediness, to find a place of surrender, to find a place of sincere appreciation and acceptance for who you are without trying to be anything more, without trying to deserve more.

Then, from that grounded, centered, smaller place, it's so much more effective. It's like you're really present.

# Compassionate Questioning

**Mark:** When you get to the conversation itself, I have something that we call compassionate questioning. Compassionate questioning is almost as if you're doing an assessment.

If you're a holistic practitioner, then you already know how to assess patients. It's very similar to that. You go into a place where you're asking questions about the person's situation.

You're asking those questions for two reasons:

1. To build a connection.
2. To see if you can see a path forward.

It doesn't have to be a complete assessment; it's not an hour-and-a-half, full-on session. It's just you, knowing what you know about your expertise, asking enough questions that you understand the path forward, and you have an idea of a course of a treatment for what they might need.

It may not be complete healing, because we know we can't promise healing to anybody. But we can say, *"This is what I believe is going to be effective. This is going to help you move forward."*

That's one of the things when you can begin to see the path forward. The other piece touches the safety piece where you are asking the questions, and they're telling you about it so that they can feel heard.

They feel like they've told their story, and they've been witnessed and empathized with. I think all of us who have been sick in the past or present know what it feels like to be sick. For somebody to say, *"Oh yeah, I've got a solution for you!"* makes you like, *"Man, back off! I'm sick!"*

It feels so much better to have somebody say, *"Oh, you're sick. I'm so sorry you're struggling with this,"* and ask compassionate questions and let you tell them your story to a certain extent.

It's so freeing for the person. It's actually part of the healing process. People who know about healing know that being witnessed, being able to tell your story, being able to show up without judgment and with full acceptance is part of the healing.

Your sales conversation can actually start the healing process in that way.

# 21 Non Empathic Responses

**Tad:** Yes. This is really true in my experience. As Marshall Rosenberg speaks of in his work on Non Violent Communication – empathy before education.

I'd actually like to share some thoughts on this. I did a survey inviting people's feedback on their 'holistic practitioner horror stories'. Almost all the stories had to do with this – a lack of empathy. And I think this is actually an area a lot of practitioners don't even realize they could use work.

Many of the following responses practitioners give to people's pain may *seem* empathic, until you're at the receiving end of them. I'd like to give 21 examples of this . . . and I invite people who are reading this to take a moment to reflect on where they tend to go in conversations with people.

1. **Selling:** *"Well, I can get that fixed in a jiffy. Easy. Let's just book an appointment right now . . ."*
2. **Advising:** *"I think you should . . ."* or *"How come you didn't?"*
3. **Analyzing:** *"Well, I think it's clear the reason this happened is . . ."*
4. **Arguing:** *"That isn't right at all. That isn't how it happened."* or *"Boy. I really disagree with you on that."*
5. **Commiserating:** *"That's terrible. She had no right to do that to you."*
6. **Condemning:** *"I need to call you on your limiting beliefs there."*
7. **Consoling:** *"It wasn't your fault; you did the best you could."* or *"Everything's going to be okay."*
8. **Correcting:** *"That's not how it happened."* or *"It's not really that hard."*
9. **Criticizing:** *"You know what your problem is?"* or *"Can't you do anything right?"*
10. **Diagnosing:** *"This is happening because you're so passive-aggressive."* or *"You know, you really have a limiting pattern of always doing \_\_\_\_\_."* or *"You know what your problem is?"*
11. **Educating:** *"This could turn into a very positive experience for you if you just . . ."* or *"Well, in my experience, it was very different."* or *"I have a very different relationship to*

that.”

12. **Evaluating:** “*If you hadn’t been so careless.*”
13. **Explaining:** “*I would have called but . . .*” or “*I didn’t want to do it this way, but . . .*”
14. **Fixing:** “*What will help you is to . . .*”
15. **Interpretations:** “*I think he did that because . . .*”
16. **Interrogating:** “*When did this begin? What are you feeling?*”
17. **Lecturing:** “*It’s like I always say. . .*” or “*How many times do I have to tell you?*”
18. **One-Upping:** “*That’s nothing: wait’ll you hear what happened to me.*”
19. **Shutting Down:** “*Cheer up. Don’t worry. Don’t feel so bad.*”
20. **Story-telling:** “*That reminds me of a time . . .*” or “*Oh! That reminds me of this Tony Robbins seminar that I went to once. Tony said . . .*”
21. **Sympathizing:** “*Oh you poor thing.*”

# How to Give Empathic Responses

**Tad:** First of all, I think the most important thing is to be human about it. There's no formula here. The key is being really present with them and honouring what they're experiencing. That could sound like a lot of things. Importantly: it might just be you listening and really hearing them.

But the key is this: even if you absolutely know an easy and quick solution to the problem they are facing, even if it's no big deal for you . . . it's a big deal to them in their experience. We need to honour their experience and connect with that, instead of dismissing it.

- *“Wow. That sounds really intense.”*
- *“What a journey you're on right now.”*
- *“Yeah . . . are you feeling really overwhelmed by it all?”*
- *“Sounds like feeling really scared and just totally confused about why this is happening . . .”*
- *“How is that for you?”*
- *“How are you feeling about all that? How are you holding up?”*
- *“Sounds like you're really struggling between a conventional approach and an alternative more holistic one and feeling confused about where to go with it.”*

When people get it that you are totally present with their pain – without trying to fix it or giving them nothing but pity – they actually begin to heal. They feel ennobled. We hold them both in their power and their suffering.

**NOTE:** I'd actually like to share some of the stories and comments I got from the survey about the impact of a lack of empathy (and the lack of empathy) from practitioners. You can find them in the Appendix on page 26.

# Be a Map Maker, Not a Roadblock

**Tad:** Let's go back to asking questions until you can see a path forward, because this ties into something I remember. It was the first audio I ever heard from you.

It was a ten-minute clip, and you talked about being an interruption, versus being a mapmaker. I just loved it, and I'm wondering if you can touch on that.

**Mark:** It goes back to what I was saying about the offer itself. The analogy I use is I say, let's say your client is in Portland and trying to get to Salem, and they're struggling, have hit some problem, or don't know how to get there.

If you come up and say, "*Hey, I've got a session. Why don't you come get a session?*" and the session looks like a roadblock. It looks like a detour. I don't see the word "Salem" anywhere in that.

**Tad:** It's one more thing that they have to deal with before they get on their way.

**Mark:** Exactly. What you want to do is think about being the mapmaker. You say, "*I see you want to get to Salem. I want to help you get there. The next step on the way to Salem that I can see is this step. These five sessions, or this course of treatment, or this is what I would like to start you with to get you going towards Salem.*"

It's always holding with that empathetic, compassionate view. Where is it that your client is trying to get to? In all of this, you're asking questions, they're telling you the story.

# When Do You Talk About What You Have To Offer?

**Mark:** Some of you might be thinking in the back of your mind, “*When do I get to talk about what I do? When does it shift to me? When do we talk about the offer?*”

Let me tell you, that’s an awkward transition. Anybody who’s tried to shift the focus from somebody else to themselves will know how awkward it feels. It’s a difficult transition.

I don’t think it’s right to make the shift from **them** to **you**. I think that with compassionate questioning, what you’re doing is looking for that pivot point where you are shifting focus, but what you’re doing is shifting from a focus on the **past** and **present** to a focus on the **future**.

It might be a shared future in which they’re working with you so you can help them get to Salem. That shift, that pivot is something that you can often feel intuitively or energetically.

For example, you’re talking to them or asking them questions, and you just have a sense of “okay, it’s time.” When we do this exercise in the seminar, people report that they really do notice that there was a point in the conversation where enough had been said, they had asked enough questions, and the person felt empathized with.

They didn’t have to say anything; they just kind of felt it. People who felt that and ignored that moment and kept trying to ask questions or kept talking or telling stuff, the energy went dead, and they started to get “glazed-eye syndrome,” which we’re all familiar with: staring off into space.

But if you pay attention to that moment, then what you can do is stop, take a breath, and say “*I really appreciate all of this that you’ve told me. We started out talking about you are potentially interested in getting some help.*”

This is where it’s really helpful to be coming out of the second journey where they already have approached you, and they already have expressed some interest and familiarity with who you are.

You can then ask the question, “*What were you hoping or imagining I might be able to do for you?*”

**Tad:** Why do you use that particular wording?

**Mark:** It’s the concept. You could probably change the wording; it’s not a script exactly. The



question is asking them how they are imagining you in their future. Through all this questioning, they've started to think, "*This person might be my practitioner. Maybe they'll be the person who can help me.*"

You ask them that question, and they tell you that. There's one of two responses that usually comes out. One response is they tell you how they were imagining how you might be able to help them. Then they'll ask, "*Can you do that?*" or something similar to that. Or they'll say, "*I'm not quite sure. How can you help me?*"

With either response, they've asked you a question about what you can do for them. That question is really important because when you hear that question, you know that you then have an invitation to make the offer, to say, "*This is how I think I can help you. This is what I see could really help you with this condition.*"

That's how you make that transition to "here's the offer."

**Tad:** I love that. I know what you're saying about there being that moment and how if you ignore it, things go dead.

I keep being brought back to my dating life. Let's say a fellow meets a girl in the street, and they start talking. There comes a point where I either have to be like, "Can I get your number?" or "Do you want to grab some coffee right now?" or something.

Just standing on the street with her starts to get weird and awkward. There's a staleness; something has to move, one-way or the other. She's standing there thinking, "Is he interested in me?" Again . . . my high school dating life.

It's funny that we don't think about that. There's just this fear to go into it, yet we don't see the cost of not making that transition. I really liked that.

**Mark:** It's just a fact; it's just a truth. Acknowledging it and acting on it actually shows a certain level of strength and a certain level of sovereignty that creates trust.

# Leadership: Being a Trusted Advisor

**Mark:** It's another one of those safety things. How is somebody feeling when they're sick or stuck with something? They're feeling helpless. They're feeling vulnerable. They're feeling a little lost. If you're willing to show some leadership in the conversation, even if it's asking that kind of question, "*How are you imagining...*" that shows leadership, and it allows them to lean into that leadership. It allows them to start treating you like a practitioner.

**Tad:** I think there really is something about coming into the interaction as a practitioner already, even in listening. You're coming from that place of curiosity and exploring, and getting to the place of "could I help them?" and not assuming that we can. If we can't, is there somebody else who can help them? We're coming from that curious place. I know I've found myself in conversations where I'll say something like, "*What you're going through sounds really intense. Can I share a perspective on that?*"

They say yes. I say, "*Here's my take on why this problem comes up sometimes. Let me share it and see how it lands with you.*" Then I'll share it with them.

Let's say it's in a marketing sense. They'll say, "*We've got this thing that just isn't working for us in terms of word of mouth.*"

I'll ask them a bunch of questions. I'll say, "*Can I share my perspective on that?*" They say yes.

I say, "*Here's my understanding of word of mouth. Here are the three main parts of it. It sounds like the part that's missing here is this...*"

When they hear that overall context, when they hear that diagnosis or perspective on **why** that problem is showing up, there's something incredibly reassuring about it.

There's also a path forward for them. They think, "*Oh, if I were to handle that and that, it makes sense that things would change for me.*"

I don't talk about this a lot, but I went through a gallbladder situation. I ended up needing surgery, which I hated; I did not want to have it. I hated it when people were just like, "*Oh, I read about this flush. Totally handles gallstones.*" There was no empathy. There was no expertise. They'd never actually researched the treatment. They didn't have a clue what they were talking about. It seemed dismissive.

What I was craving and really never found was somebody to empathize and say, "*Wow, this must be so scary! You ate so well, took such great care of yourself, and still this happens to you.*"

Ironically, the most empathy I ever got was from my family doctor. He sat there and said, *“Well Tad, this is really unusual for someone so young, male and slim to get these. I’m curious if you have any sense of what it’s all about.”*

And I sat there stunned. Did my family doctor just ask my opinion on why I was experiencing this? And then towards the end he said, *“Well, the stones are asymptomatic right now – there’s no pain . . . so what do you think we should do?”*

Again, stunned. He was open to my needs and desires. He shared his perspectives and concerns – but with such incredible sensitivity.

So, I just didn’t get the empathy I was hoping for from most people. But I also didn’t get the expertise. I never talked to a single person who could help me understand why I was going through this situation.

I wanted to meet someone who would be able to tell me something like, *“Let me share my understanding of how gallstones form and what the mechanism behind that is. It’s something that happens in the liver with the bile, and here’s how the stuff precipitates out of it... That’s how gallstones form. Here’s the mechanism that reverses that.”*

If somebody had been able to share that, I would have spent so much money and time and effort. But as it was, they said, *“A massage could help. It balances everything; it affects you at a cellular level.”* Yada yada.

There were all these vague platitudes, but I didn’t feel confident in those. Because I didn’t feel confident, I wasn’t about to spend a lot of money.

**Mark:** Confidence, safety, same thing.

**Tad:** People need to know that if they invest this time and energy, it will be worth it. What I did not want was to go in for a Reiki session. I wanted somebody to help me with my gallstone.

**Mark:** Who wants that? Who wants spiritual healing? They want what they want. They’re trying to get where they want to get to. It’s such an important piece.

**Tad:** When we get to the conversation of rebooking, what comes to mind is how when most practitioners ask somebody to book, number one, they’re asking them to book outside of any context of trust or relationship.

It’s just an isolated sort of asking, because they were told, *“You have to ask for what you want. You have to get over the fear and just ask people.”*

Number two, we ask them to come in for a single session. It’s a session that’s not super related to the other person’s journey. Then they get to the end of the session, and you’re like, *“Do you want to come back for another session?”*

I'm just saying that that whole orientation is a setup for awkwardness.

**Mark:**

This is one of my biggest pet peeves about practitioners, holistic practitioners I've seen in the past. One of the things that I love about my current acupuncturist is that she's so clear about this.

Somebody comes in, I have a session with them, it's been really great, and they've helped me a lot. In my marketing savvy I'll say, "*What should I do? What do you want?*"

They'll say, "*Whatever you want to do is fine with me.*"

I want to throttle them! I'm like, "*I don't know what I need!*"

When I see a holistic practitioner that I've put my health into the hands of and they tell me, "*Whatever you want. You're in charge; you make the decision,*" I feel abandoned.

I feel like I've been dropped like a hot potato, that all of the care, support, guidance, and strength that I've experienced as a practitioner suddenly went out of the room, and I've been left alone in a dark corner in the middle of the night. I'm so outta there!

I saw my acupuncturist today. I have a cold, I'm not wanting it to get worse, and she's treated me for the long-term. She's treated me for over a year now. She looked at me after this treatment and said firmly, "*I want you coming back in a week.*"

When she said that, there was not an iota of neediness. It wasn't like I was going to rebook for her, so that she could get paid.

She has my care at heart, and she knows what I need. It's like when you make a prescription for somebody. Make the prescription, tell them what they need.

When you look at them honestly, and you say "*If they really want to take care of this, what is it really going to take?*" If you come at it from that same place of surrender and strength that you had when you were treating them not two minutes ago, that's what they're dying to hear.

If they really don't want to do it, they'll say no, but they're wanting to hear your recommendations and understanding of the situation as the practitioner. That's my experience.

I just want to wrap up that last piece and put an exclamation point on it, which I already have by talking about this piece around the rebooking.

If you, as a practitioner, can be really honest about what you think the client needs to get where they're going, can express this to them, everything works out. It works out better for them, and it works out better for you.

## Programs vs. Individual Sessions

**Mark:** With this piece that we talked about earlier about creating a program, creating a series of sessions, or packaging things instead of session by session, it's really painful for a client, a patient, to have to make a purchasing decision every single time.

We talked about how hard it is to make a purchasing decision. You don't want them to have to make a purchasing decision every single time instead of just committing.

For those of you who don't know me, I was a paramedic for eight years. I have one-year-old twin sons, and this year I've had a lot of my post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms come up with memories from my paramedic work with little kids.

It's been really horrible the way it affected me. I went to somebody who does some somatic therapy around releasing trauma. I was like, "*What is this going to take?*"

She was like, "*I need you to come in for a minimum of six sessions, then we'll reassess.*"

That was it! I wasn't making a choice every single session, thinking, "*Should I come in again, should I come in again, should I come in again?*"

I was resting in the fact that I'm coming in for six sessions. It smoothed out her cash flow, but what it really does is serve me and the need that I have, and that's what we did. We did six sessions, then we ended up doing a couple more, and then I was complete. It was great.

But if she hadn't said that, if I had to be wonder if I was done every session, and she wasn't giving me clear guidance about what that looked like, I maybe would have stuck around for a session and decided, "*This doesn't work. I need to find a different practitioner.*"

**Tad:** It just keeps coming back to me about them getting to where they want to go and orienting everything around that. When the client gets where they want to go, and you know that you were committed to supporting them on that journey, it feels so good.

Some practitioners say, "*Well, you can't get them totally well.*" Maybe you can't, but maybe you can take them part of the way. If you can't help them, then you can refer them to someone else.

If they're interested, you can offer packages that center around one tangible result, like "Eliminate Lower Back Pain" or "Migraines Be Gone!"

Any last thoughts?

**Mark:** The only thing I can think of is to reiterate this piece around safety, making friends with your own neediness, and being willing to acknowledge that the purchase, the sale,

the enrollment conversation or however you want to talk about it, having a client become a client is sacred enough that it's worth putting some extra attention on, preparing for it, and building up to it.

With that kind of preparation, care, and love put into the whole process and the parts surrounding the process, the conversation itself can be a beautiful experience.

**Tad:** Thank you so much, Mark. I just loved everything you were saying. I got chills a few times because everything you were saying was so clear.

**Mark:** I love this topic. It's been really fun for me. Thanks.

**Tad:** Cool. And . . .

. . . for those of you reading this: keep reading and you'll see me delve more deeply into the four biggest 'client repelling traits' you can have; a bunch of holistic practitioner **horror and success** stories (with some fairly obvious implications to selling); and then an excerpt from my treatise on the Principles of Preeminence. Enjoy!

If you want to dig into Mark's stuff more check out:  
[heartofbusiness.com](http://heartofbusiness.com)

# The Monkey Trap: Why we can't let go of the sale.

A few years ago, I learned that the national park rangers of Africa have devised a unique way of catching monkeys.

Frequently the rangers will need to capture a monkey to tag them or administer some kind of medicine. In an effort not to harm the monkeys with guns and darts, the rangers have come up with something they call the banana method. They take a fairly large and heavy Plexiglas box and drill a small hole in the side of it, a hole just big enough for the monkey to get its hand through.

Inside the box they place a banana (or a nut or some rice). Inevitably the monkey will see the banana through the Plexiglas and come down from the tree to get it. A similar southeast Asian monkey trap is constructed from a hollow gourd with a single opening just large enough for the monkey's hand to grasp the tempting bait of fruit.

It is easy enough to get its hand in and grab hold of the banana, but once the monkey makes a fist with the banana in it, there is no way for it to pull it's hand back out.

So it's stuck.

That is as long as it refuses to let go of the banana.

But for some reason, having to do with complex issues of adaptation and instinct, monkeys – virtually every single one of them – have a terrible time letting go. Freedom is right there for the taking if only they let loose their grip. But they don't. A part of them holds on for dear life.

A part of them remains stuck.

And it's important to remember that it's not their whole being stuck in the cage, only their fist, only one small part of them. But that one small part, because it is unable to let go, becomes a great weight to the monkey, basically holding the rest of the monkey and its life hostage.

And we're a bit like that sometimes.

Even though logically and intellectually we know we must "let go of the sale" (or argument) we don't.

You see, intellectually, 'letting go of the sale' makes good sense. We apply it without problems on a good day. But what happens when you feel your survival threatened?

You're not making quota

You're close to broken can't pay the rent or the mortgage

We know you could be fired

You're about to lose a sale to a competitor

You may never see this person again! This is your only chance!

In these situations we get scared. We get stressed. We get into fear and we revert to old patterns. We do one of three things. We . . .

Fight: We get scared fight we push

Flight: We stop. We leave the meeting. Were so afraid of pushing

Fright: We are mostly shut down. We go blank

A friend of mine has a grandmother who would revert to Yiddish when she got angry. When flustered she went back to what was most familiar – her mother tongue. We do the same unless we prepare for the situations. Unless we have tools to use in those moments. Unless we know the exact words to say. Creation begins with imitation. Unless the principles have gone that deep within us. It's good to get help on how we can approach these things differently. I'll be writing more about this in other posts so keep your eyes open.



# The Real Goal in Sales

What is your real goal when selling?

What would be a 'bullseye' for you?

One of the biggest challenges that people have when trying to shift their relationship to selling is the fear that, "If I let go of the sales focus and instead focus just on serving my client, then they may take advantage of me."

And, actually, there is some real justification to that concern. I know many people who allow themselves to be taken advantage of; but, that's NOT what I'm suggesting you do.

I would suggest that there are really three places you can put your focus:

**1) On the sale** - From this focus you create pressure which leads to rejection and pain for both parties. It dehumanizes the process. You might make sales but it feels wrong. You don't respect them. You are putting an obligation on them.

**2) On your prospective client liking or respecting you** – You give away the store. You are taken advantage of. This is also a de-humazing process. It's the flip side of focusing on the sale. You make sales, but not much profit. You don't respect yourself. You are obligating yourself.

Notice which of those options you tend to choose . . .

This sense of polarity is actually very common. At one extreme you're so service-oriented that your taken advantage of. If you shift to the other extreme, you are as aggressive as possible to protect yourself. It's like protection mechanism. Either way, you're afraid that you'll be taken advantage of. Either way, you're coming from fear. Either way, you're being reactive. Either way, someone loses.

*"When you win, you lose."*

St. Francis of Assisi

Clearly, neither of these are particularly appealing. So, what can you do?

Most people think of selling as one of these two extremes. And they don't feel comfortable with either one. So, they go for something in the middle.

But, that often means they manipulate and push people a little less and give away a little less of their margin.

In the compromise scenario:  $1+1 = 1.5$

There's no synergy. That's why the circle is smaller.

And it doesn't feel good. That's why it's black and hanging down lower – it's heavy. It's the worst of both worlds.

What I'm suggesting is not some tepid middle ground that leaves both parties only vaguely satisfied and slightly resentful.

I'm suggesting there's actually a higher road to take. I'm suggesting there's another way that is greater than a compromise of the two polarities.

It's a focus on the truth.

**Focusing On The Truth Of The Other Person's Situation (And Yours While We're At It):**

When you focus on the truth something wonderful happens: everyone wins.

There's synergy. Instead of being stuck in between two unappealing options – this shines above them both like the sun warming both you and the person you're connecting with.

In this scenario  $1+1 =$  can be more than two because of the synergy. It's not logical but it's the reality what collaboration does. You've probably experienced the power of cooperation. The whole, somehow, ends up being greater than the sum of its parts.

In order to take this higher road, you need to let go of your attachment to either extreme. You must let go of your need for the sale and your need for them to like you. You might get the sale – you might not. Let go of the need for friendship. If you don't become friends at least you were human with each other.

When you focus on the truth instead of trying to “close the sale” you “open a conversation.” Instead of putting the weight of obligation on their shoulders you share and explore opportunities. It feels more natural.

“Being overly concerned with the reward will never enhance the outcome of our work, but instead will interfere with your performance. When Archer's eyes on the prize rather than the bull's-eye, he surely will miss the bull's-eye as well as the prize.”

Chin-Ning Chu

Playing “The Game” creates compromise.

Having a Conversation produces cooperation. It's not a compromise in the middle. It's a higher ground to stand on. It's a higher road to take. It rises you above the game. It positions you far above the competition.

This is win/win or no deal. It gives you a new found freedom to simply walk away if the truth is that you can't help them.

You really won't be taken advantage of – that would be lose/win. You'll tell the truth about your capacity. If you can't solve their problem you'll tell them so. Imagine that. Your experience is part of the truth of the situation.

You're not giving anything away for free (unless your truth is that you want to).

So, to summarize: There are really two aspects of the truth in any selling situation. And it's important that you put them in the right order — especially in the first few minutes of your conversation:

1) First, focus on the truth about their situation. Always lead with this. That is the gracious (and effective) thing to do. Always lead with a focus on their problems and their worlds in their language. Do they have a problem? Do they want to solve it? The more you can shift away from any notion of greed, selfishness or neediness and focus totally on the truth about the other person's situation, the more successful you will be. Then, if the truth of your situation is that you can't help them – if it's not a match – you easily let it go. If it seems that it is a match then you explore that by...

2) Secondly sharing the truth about your situation. Your situation includes the problems you can solve for them, your capacity, what you can't do, etc.

Remember: see first to understand and then to be understood.

In practice, it's not quite so straightforward. It's not like ladder or a set of stairs that you follow in a linear progression. The conversation is going to be more like a spiral always circling inwards until it reaches the center — the truth. The problem with most sales training is that it doesn't understand the actual dynamics of conversation. It's going to be more of a back and forth.

Having said that, again, always lead with the truth about their situation.

And, the truth is, it often won't be a match. But, that's a good thing. The sooner you know the truth about the situation — the sooner you can move on to somebody else, who you might be able to help.

Kenny Rogers summed it up perfectly in his song 'The Gambler' when he sang: "You've got two know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em. Know when to walk away, know when to run."

If we're to focus on people liking us, we tend to think that the solution is to just "back off". But, it's important to notice where that comes from — it comes from the fear of pressuring people.

But, shouldn't you be afraid of pressuring people? No.

You probably need more fear and stress in your life like need another hole in your head. So, here's an interesting set of distinctions for you to sit with

“Fear of Pressure” Versus “Awareness of Pressure”:

The fear of pressure will immobilize you and make you feel powerless. It will cause you to become tense and stressed out in sales situations. That will make you less human and harder to connect with. It will also stop you from being present, because you'll be entirely focused on what you don't want. An awareness of pressure is simply that — it's noticing it. It's being conscious of what creates it and how to diffuse it when it comes up. It's the acknowledgement that pressure is inherently going to be there. In fact, in some cases, there's really nothing you can do about it being there when you show up — but if you have an awareness of it, you can address it head-on.

“Fear of Pressure” Versus “An Interest in the Truth”: A fear of pressure might stop you from asking important questions. A gentle interest in the truth will cause people to feel heard, respected and keep you focused on what you want — not what you don't want.

Three Presuppositions Will Help You With Your Focus On The Truth:

**1. The truth is always present:** We are often confused about how we lost a sale right at the end of the process. We are shocked and hurt when we discover our prospects have been lying to us or using us to 'get information'. It seems this new information showed up all of a sudden at the end. But, in reality, that information was there all along.

This seems obvious.

But if it was there all long – why can't we see it? Why do we keep getting surprised by something that was already there? Because it was hidden behind a very thin, but impenetrable veil known as "The Game". And this Game is the source of virtually all your pain in selling. The Game operates by hovering one level above the truth. You may not be able to see it — but it's there. You will never see it while you are in The Game.

It's like the movie The Matrix. While you're in The Matrix – you can't see the real world. The Matrix seems so real. It's so convincing. You'd think you were getting real information.

So, what starts this Game? And, more importantly, how do you get out of it?

**2. Pressure starts The Game:** The Game starts the second that the other person perceives or experiences pressure being applied. And they will experience pressure in the same instant you decide to focus on “the sale”. You end this Game by:

A focus on the truth.

Becoming aware of your own pressuring behavior.

Practicing the art of constantly diffusing pressure.

Trusting your intuition on whether they are speaking the truth or not.

**3. The truth is enough:** This is an important distinction. The truth is all you need. In fact, the truth is all you’ve got in the end. It’s the only thing that’s real in your conversation. Everything else is pretense or defense. If you decide to play The Game you lose sales, get rejected and sometimes feel miserable. You waste time chasing people.

You don’t need fancy closing techniques. You really don’t.

# Being Present in Sales

When you begin to live more in the present, you understand that you really can't see the future — and that makes you a lot more human. Instead of focusing on selling people you find yourself enjoying them. You also stop investing time on people and projects that might have potential but no real prospects.

The critical shift to make is to become more interested in the present than you are in the future. You can do this when you understand that a well-lived present automatically creates a fulfilling future. The present moment is an excellent teacher; the future is just a seducer.

*“By being aware of what is happening, I begin to sense how it is happening. I begin to sense Tao ... the wise leader knows it is far more important to be content with what is actually happening and to get upset over what might be happening but isn't... been unconscious is not a crime; it is merely a lack of a very helpful ability.”*

Tao of Leadership

In sales, it's never about moving things forwards. In fact, sometimes, you need to move things backwards. Why? To get present with the prospective client. You must never be further ahead than them.

*“The Supreme value is not the future but the present. Whoever build a house for future happiness builds a prison for the present.”*

Octavio Paz

Why not?

Well, especially in the beginning, you are walking on their road on their path — and you can't guess where that will go — they will need to lead you. As your relationship develops, you will be creating the road together to help them get from where they are to where they want to go. But you can't create the road together, if you're 2 miles ahead of them. Make sense?

Traditional sales training teaches us to always be a few steps ahead of the prospect.

This is one of the core problems with the old way of selling. Additionally, people who are trained in these methodologies quickly get overwhelmed with the amount of tools and techniques — they feel like they have to use them all. They feel like, if they aren't using them all, perfectly, in each sales situation they are somehow failing. It fosters a bizarre sort of perfectionism that really hurts the person-to-person interaction.

It is hard to be real and authentic when most of your brain was trying to remember what exact line to say next. Instead of focusing on the world of the person, you are quietly thinking to yourself, “Okay, what step am I on? What tool/close/technique/line should I use right now?”

That's what I mean about trying to stay ahead of them.

It's very difficult to be aware of what's really happening around you when you're busy striving for some goal. Many salespeople are living on adrenaline. That adrenaline overstimulates and desensitizes them to what they're feeling in the present.

*“Marta keeps telling me I should try to be more aware of things as they're happening. I think it's  
Marta who says that.”*

Jack Handey

# Truth in Sales

The words ‘selling’ and ‘truth’ don’t often go together.

Because selling is almost always about ‘getting the sale’ instead of ‘uncovering the truth’. And that’s what I want to talk about here. Uncovering the truth.

Truth of things either being a good fit or not.

## The Finest Music In Of the World

*In Celtic mythology, there lives a band of warriors known as the Fianna. They were the most noble, powerful and fierce defenders of Ireland. It was an extensive and harrowing process to become a member of this group. The leader of this band was Fionn Mac Cumhaill [pronounced: Finn MacCool].*

*Once Fionn, and his hunters were discussing the “finest music in the world.” The question was put out to the group as a riddle, “what is the finest music in the world?” The hunters began to give their answers. One said it was the sound of a stag running across the lake. Another disagreed, saying it was the sound of raindrops falling onto leaves. Another suggested it was the laughter of a young girl. The sound of dogs yelping thing during the chase, wind in the grass or water falling over stone. Each hunter seemed to have a strong opinion.*

*Then one hunter turned to Fionn and asked him, “And what do you think is the finest music in the world?”*

*He replied, “The finest music in all the world is the music of what is happening.”*

You might find it useful to let go of trying to persuade people and simply focus on listening for and exploring the truth.

After all, when you finally reach the truth of the situation — that’s all there is. What else can there be? The truth is much more real and compelling — and far more powerful — than any manufactured “closing tool”.

Think about it.

If the truth is that they only have so much money — that’s the truth. They really don’t have more money. They don’t have less money than that. They just have the amount they said. Your “Closing Techniques” won’t put one more cent in their wallet. You need to deal with that. You need to work



with that. It doesn't mean they won't buy. It doesn't mean you can't help them. It just helps you define the territory so you can navigate it more skillfully.

You may even find a way to still be able to help them given the reality of their budget.

But, it's very expensive and misery-making to try and argue with reality.

Whenever there's a problem with the client always go back to the truth. First, take a deep breath, let go of any attachment you have to them buying your product or service and let go of any agenda you have to move them forward in the process. Get centered. Get curious. Open yourself up to whenever possibility emerges, and then engage in a conversation with them that helps reveal the truth of the situation.

Always go back to the truth.

### Sales Tools, Technologies and Skills:

It would be a huge mistake to label all of the existing sales tools and methodologies as bad or "wrong". They aren't. They are sometimes inherently manipulative, often unnecessary, frequently overwhelming and, almost always, simply overused.

You can use elaborate tools and systems like Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) with tools like matching and mirroring, or making sure that you're speaking on someone's leading representational system [whether that be visual, auditory or kinesthetic]. You can elicit people's metaprograms. You can learn how to put people in subtle trances to make them more open to your influence.

You can spend a great deal of time learning various personality typing systems. You can learn how to, within a short period of time put people into a box based on your perception of their lifestyle choices [such as the Values And Lifestyle Survey – (VALS)] or their personality [e.g. the DISC model].

You can learn a lot of elaborate influence skills and "power-persuasion" techniques.

You can do a lot of things.

But, what I'm going to suggest is that all of these skills are entirely secondary [and that some should be dismissed with great force].

Make your first and last priority — getting to the truth.

If you spend too much time learning complicated communication strategies, and trying to memorize the precise sequence and ordering of your sales process — it will prevent you from being present with your clients and prospects. Your body will be there, but your mind will be "nearby" if you catch my drift. And people feel that.

Prospects and clients are much more intuitive than we give them credit for. They can feel it when they're being manipulated and pushed around.

Of course this is precisely what many techniques were invented to counter. They saw that overt disagreement and confrontation didn't work, so they became more subtle. In the "old sales," there's lots of talk about "never argue" or "never directly challenged the prospects belief". They talk of using aikido style communication. First you align and then you redirect. You try to be graceful. But, here is the key question that never gets asked.

Graceful at what?

Graceful at moving your client forward towards a sale.

And what always happens when you try to move someone — no matter how gracefully or subtly — towards a sale? And that is precisely what creates pressure and resistance in the first place.

Let go of the sale and focus on the truth of 'is this a fit?'

It is or it isn't.

# The Double Edged Sword of Absolute Certainty In Sales

World-famous peak performance consultant in turnaround expert Anthony Robbins often tells the story of when he first went to work with motivational speaker Jim Rohn. He was hired as a sales person.

Well, Anthony Robbins would spend the 45 minutes while driving to every single sales call putting himself into a “peak state”. He would shout positive affirmations again and again and again. When he arrived he was so certain that they would buy that there was absolutely no chance for them not to buy. He was vibrating with certainty.

This worked so well for him, that every single person, who we sat down with for the first month bought. Bar none. And he’s not lying. It’s an actual fact. If I remember correctly, he sat down with about 200 prospects — and every... single... one of them bought a ticket to a very expensive seminar.

That’s the power of congruency.

Whenever two people meet, as long as there is rapport, the person who is most certain will dominate the situation. That’s true. However, here is the part of the story that Anthony Robbins sometimes forgets to share.

About half of the people who he sold backed out within the coming days. Half.

There was massive buyers remorse. Why? They had been pushed, bullied and essentially forced to buy through Tony’s conviction. He hadn’t left any space for them to say, “no.” And, if you don’t give your prospect the opportunity to say no, they won’t. Not to your face, anyway. They will just wait quietly until you go, and then they will call your company and leave message saying what? You guessed it, ” I changed my mind.”

That, also, is the power of congruency. It’s a double edged sword.

I made some cartoons recently about niche marketing. But secretly they’re also about this topic. There is a real trend in sales training to make sure that you are congruent. In other words, make sure your words, voice qualities and nonverbal communication are all aligned. Somehow, you are supposed to do this all consciously. Somehow you’re supposed to notice if the fact that you’re raising your left eyebrow a quarter of an inch is congruent with that word that you just said. It’s ridiculous, if not entirely impossible.

We are told to “fake it to you make it”, to “congruently act as if you knew what you are doing”. Now, while there may be some life or death situations that call for this level of “created certainty,” day-to-day sales probably... isn’t... one of them.

It’s almost a form of brainwashing.

When you consider that most sales training is very aggressive, dominating, paternalistic, tough and goal oriented you realize that it’s no coincidence the most of the sales trainers are male. In sales we’re taught to be tough.

“Little boys don’t cry.” If you meet with the prospect, and they say, “No. We’re going to go with your competitor.” It’s not uncommon to have the sales manager berate to you for having “given up”. For not having tried “hard enough”. For not being skilled enough.

There is a subtle way that you become labeled as a wimp. All too frequently people’s bosses will say to them, in essence, “Get back in there. Stop whining.”

That can take a heavy toll on your self-esteem. And if you are the boss you don’t get out of this – in fact, you’re harder on yourself, aren’t you?

And so many of us did stop whining. We live that game. We went through the intense hazing that happens in corporations. We hype ourselves up to cover the pain we were experiencing. The excitement becomes a sort of armor and painkiller to protect and numb us from the constant rejection were facing.

When faced with poor statistics and results — most senior managers don’t want to admit they are wrong. Even worse, there is a subtle sense of, “I did it the hard way. I had to suffer through constant rejection and so should you. You’re not going to get off easy if I wasn’t able to you.” But that’s not something to condemn those senior managers for. Because, to admit that they could have achieved the same goal without the same incredible psychological pain — to admit there was a better way — would mean that they were wrong. That’s not something that anyone — especially macho males — find easy to do.

So, rather than look for a new strategy — they simply push everyone to “try harder”. After all, they are being pushed to create more profits by the shareholders. Then, they push the salespeople and the salespeople are told to push the prospects until the prospect say “yes”.

Everyone’s pushing someone.

This is ironic — and not a little tragic — because ‘pushing’ virtually guarantees that you – the salesperson – will be rejected. The experience of rejection is literally manufactured by the sales person within the process.

Rejection is often a self-inflicted wound.

We are taught to believe that congruency is something you whip on from the outside. If you're feeling uncertain, you are told simply to pump yourself up, or get yourself in the peak state. And, again, but nothing wrong with these techniques. For many people, they can be very useful. However, what is rarely explored is why we are incongruent in the first place. If our words and our nonverbal communication don't match — why is that? Is it really because we're not trying hard enough? Or could it be because, deep down, we don't really believe what we're saying?

There's a scary thought.

What will happen if we have to admit that we don't really believe our product or service delivers on everything we say it will.

What happens if you find yourself sitting with the client, and you know that you will never be able to fulfill on all your promises? Do you try to convince them that you will? Sometimes you know that, as soon as you get the order, they are going to get some pretty horrendous service — but you try to fake and pretend like they won't. That's the cause of incongruency — dishonesty.

If you want to be congruent — become radically honest.

Then, you won't have to try to be congruent. In fact, read that sentence again. The fact that you are trying to be congruent — reveals that you're not already congruent.

Congruency is a state that emerges naturally, not something you can force for any great length of time. Forced congruency is the beginning of self-delusion.

*“Our greatest pretenses are built up not to hide the evil in the ugly in us, but our emptiness. The hardest thing to hide is something that is not there.”*

Eric Hoffer

And here's the even more disturbing question: what are you trying to be congruent with? To be congruent means to “be in line with, to match up with, to be consistent with”. Are you trying to be in line with your company's policy? Are you trying to match up your behavior to your sales training? Are you trying to be consistent with society's expectations on you? Or, are you open to being consistent with your own deep inner truth and wisdom?

What would happen if you made the truth of your own experience the only thing you were committed being congruent with? Is it really worth the cost to try to be congruent with anything else?

An important question to ask yourself might be, “What's more important — being real and being myself, or becoming successful?” You can have both but which one matters most?

Naturalness vs. Pretense:

It's very important to understand the difference between naturalness and pretense. If you are behaving naturally, you're just being yourself; if you are acting with pretense, you're probably trying to be somebody you're not in order to make an impression. Pretense comes with a heavy price tag — naturalness doesn't.

In fact, this might be a good point to touch on the notion of 'humanness.' To me, the core of this is reclaiming our humanness in business. It's about getting out of the artificial buyer/seller roles and having honest conversations. Unfortunately, so many people have a failure oriented definition of their humanity. The only time they refer to it is when they screwed up and then they say, "Well, I'm only human." Somehow we've come to believe that "being human" means being prone to messing up.

I would offer another way to look at it: being human, in my experience, means being fallible while simultaneously being capable of growing into greatness.

Being more human is a good thing. But it can take a while to shed the layers of skin we have taken on due to the messages we have received about what 'professionalism' means, and how to 'sell people.' In business, these messages play like tapes in our head encouraging us to keep pushing ourselves and other people. We are told to "sell ourselves" first and then sell others — and don't give up until they say yes.

Remember: While it may be true that the person with the most certainty, and congruency is able to dominate the situation — is that really what you want? Is that what sales has become? Domination? One person subjugating another person? Something to think about.

Absolute certainty about what other people need is a double-edged sword. It's not very human. It probably doesn't feel very real or natural to yourself — or to the person you're talking with.

### The Alternative To Absolute Certainty:

You may find that humility and genuine interest in the other person is much more powerful. You may find that you can feel convinced about the value of your product and service without needing to be "convincing". You can learn to cultivate an easy certainty that you will always do your best to listen for the truth, and I speak from your truth. If you do this you will naturally become more congruent — from the inside out. Just tell the truth.

What else is there?

# Open Space Sales Technology

There's a wonderful book called "Open Space Technology" by Harrison Owen.

In 1983, he was asked to organize an international conference for 250 participants. After a year of intense labor, logistical details, dealing with big egos [including his own] and basic frustrations he swore to himself that he would never do so again.

The sentiment was further entrenched when he received the conference evaluations.

Somehow, even though people thought the conference had been fantastic, the highest rated part of the conference were the "coffee breaks" – the one part he'd had nothing to do with. Consistently people told him that that was the truly useful part of the event.

He was understandably upset.

But, then he got curious. What if he could organize a conference to be more like a coffee break? What if he could identify the basic mechanisms of a coffee break and build them into an approach for conference organizing? So he began his search for answers and, by modeling the behavior he saw in rural villages in West Africa and conversations he witnessed and enjoyed at cafes, he created what he called "Open Space Technology".

But, would these same principles work on a mass level with limited time? Certainly, a conversation is wonderful — but does it produce any results?

So, it was promptly put to the test at a Meeting of the National Education Association where 420 teachers, school board members and administrators from all across the United States gathered for one day around the theme "Education for America." When they arrived, there was no agenda. There was no schedule. There was no "script" for the day. They were told that the agenda would be created and self managed by themselves – the participants. And, in one day, they co-created and self-ran 85 workshops. By the end of the day — with an average rating of 9.3 out of 10 — the participants agreed it was the most successful, productive and energizing conference they had ever attended.

What exactly was it that allowed such stunning success? According to Harrison Owen it was four simple pressure-free principles he had developed:

The Four Principles Of Open Space:

**1) When it begins when it begins.** Instead of sticking to a rigid schedule he allowed participants to govern themselves. They would organize their own sessions and govern the start time themselves. This meant that was very little stress. It felt more natural, organic and the day developed a wonderful and humanizing flow to it.

TRANSLATION FOR SELLING: In selling, it's easy to get up-tight if a client or prospect is late for an appointment. After all, if they have to leave at two o'clock, and they show up at 15 minutes to two [instead of one o'clock] you only have 15 minutes. But 15 minutes to do what? If you're feeling stressed, it's because you think you only have a quarter of an hour to... close them. Think about it.

**2) Whoever shows up is exactly who is supposed to show up.** Because the workshops were organized in such a loose manner it was never clear, who was going to show up at any given moment. In fact, people often walked in and out of sessions. There was no one making anyone do anything. There was just a general sense of perfection and ease in who showed up.

TRANSLATION FOR SELLING: When we are selling, it can be all too easy to get frustrated if a prospect does not turn into a client. If it's clear that someone isn't interested — it's a waste of time. We should have spent that time with somebody else. Here's an intriguing question: What would happen if you let go of that and decided that whoever you talk to is exactly who you were supposed to talk to?

From another angle: a lot of people freak about about figuring out their niche — but when I have them step back and look at who is already coming to them they say, 'oh! there are a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ group here.' and they find their niche that way. And who knows who the person you're talking with is connected to. This doesn't mean you don't be strategic in who you connect with. But it means you bring your full presence to whomever you're connecting with. If you do a workshop and only three people show up — make it the best possible for them. One of them might bring you ten new clients.

**3) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened.** One of the biggest challenges that Harrison Owen found at most conferences was a try to impose an agenda on the group. Certainly, this is essential in some situations, but he found it was done indiscriminately. Before the event ever happened, the result was pre-decided.

If the gathering was bringing together young leaders from around the United States — the goal was to create a unified statement from this diverse group of young people. But, what if these young people were not unified in their beliefs? What if they disagreed with each other? Well, that just wouldn't do.

You see?

The structure and goals were decided, well before they even knew who the participants would be. They were not decided by the participants. As a result, the goals were most often not relevant to the lives and the work of these young people. The result? Very few of the youth took the process seriously.

TRANSLATION FOR SELLING: The implications of this notion in selling are even more profound. What happens if you walk into a selling situation with a specific objective in mind? What happens if you decide how you want the transaction to end before you've ever met the person or learn the



truth about their situation? What happens when you try to maneuver people — whether subtly or aggressively — into doing what you want them to do?

It creates pressure.

It's important to start with the mindset that, in any given interaction, it's either a match or it isn't. You can either help them or you can't. It's inherently there... or it isn't.

Another way to put this is that the future of any business transaction is contained in the present — just as the tree is contained in the seed. Trying to make an oak tree from an apple tree is futile. The clearer you are about the present — and what's actually happening in it — the more the future opens itself up to you and reveals itself. This sounds obvious, but when you're focused exclusively on making the sale — you're not noticing whether or not it's a match.

Your job is not to so much create something as to uncover the truth of what already so — and to feel at peace with the fact that whatever happened is the only thing that could have happened.

### Open Space Sales Technology & Michelangelo's "David":

There is an often told story about the famous artist Michelangelo. He was once asked how he created the masterpiece David from a single block of marble? Michelangelo responded that he had not created David at all. David had already been in the block. He saw that his role was merely to carve away all of the excess. His job was to carve away all that wasn't David, until only David remained.

Your job is not to create a sale — your job is to help chip away anything that is not the truth in the situation. That's what Michelangelo did — he might not be a bad person to model. Selling has become so scientific and technical. It has lost any sense of art. And, make no mistake, an authentic, honest conversation is a profound art form. Getting quickly and naturally to the truth is an art form. This applies on the personal level too — you've probably met people who are trying so hard to be a "better person," that they've lost their humanness. They've sort of, "healthied themselves sick". This often emerges from some idea that we need to become someone who we aren't. Instead of accepting that we are an oak tree we keep trying to be an apple tree.

In sales, you were likely taught that the first person you needed to sell on the value of your products and service was yourself. If you didn't believe in yourself the same lesson applied – sell yourself on your own worth. I'm suggesting the opposite. I'm suggesting that you might want to stop pressuring people to do what you want them to do — starting with yourself.

Just as you need to accept the truth about any selling situation — you might find it useful to simply accept the truth about yourself with an attitude of loving kindness. If you do this, you'll find that you will evolve without trying to improve. It may sound counterintuitive — but I think you'll find that it works. And that there's no pressure involved.

*“The outcome will be what it will be, regardless of your expectations and fears.”*

Chin-Ning Chu

**4) When it’s over, it’s over.** Instead of imposing a rigid schedule for when the session had to end — he let the conversations naturally take their course. Some conversations lost their momentum and/or quickly resolved the issues discussed. Other conversations seemed to tap into an issue so relevant to everyone involved that the conversation went on and on. There was a reasonable amount of space given for when the conversation ended.

TRANSLATION FOR SELLING: Imagine if you apply this to selling? Imagine if you give yourself the freedom to simply “walk away clean”. To bless and release. Imagine if you give yourself the freedom to simply ignore “this conversation is over.” Haven’t you felt that before? You’re having a conversation with a prospect — and your script says you should keep going — but you have a deep inward sense that the conversation is over. You’re not afraid — you just know there isn’t any more to discuss. When it’s over, it’s over.

But here’s the best part. The total pre-conference planning time for creating the agenda was: zero hours.

The results from this form of organizing are consistent. Is it appropriate in every situation? No. But, it does highlight the power of the humble conversation. Not everything needs to be planned and structured — even huge conferences with hundreds of people.

It raises the question: how much do you need to plan and prepare for your selling situations? The answer – you still need to prepare but it’s a different kind of preparation. It focuses first on your mindset and second on your language. In old sales, a great deal of time is spent on your script of presentation. With this approach the focus is on the Art of Conversation.

# The Truth About Sales Pressure

I began to really understand the toll that sales pressure took on both the buyer and the seller when I worked with the brilliant Ari Galper many years ago. His perspective is, to this day, one of the most brilliant takes on sales I've ever seen. Much of what I've written below was inspired by my relationship and work with him.

*“When you are facing a pot of boiling water, the force of the boiling water is fierce and unmanageable. Instead of dealing with the hot water, you should step back and discover the real source of the water's force: the firewood. Once the source is discovered, you can easily remove the firewood from under the cooking pot, and water loses all its might.”*

Chin-Ning Chu

Pressure:

When you start a pitch and people feel pressured they tend to have one of three reactions:

- 1) Fight: they lash out at you with sarcasm or anger.
- 2) Flight: they hang up, avoid talking with you, tell you “send me more information” so they can get off the phone.
- 3) Fright: they shut down or put up a wall

In sales, we're so conditioned to expect “push back” from clients. We're so used to experiencing resistance.

*“Never seek a fight. If it comes to you, yield; step back. It is far better to step back than to overstep yourself... advance only where you encounter no resistance... if you make a point, do not cling to it.”*

Tao of Leadership

It's normal, but it's not natural. When people first start learning this perspective — they freak out a bit. It's like having had the hiccups for years and then one day they're gone. It's an odd feeling. You're glad, but you sort of miss them. You can't remember life without them (or is that just me? maybe just me . . .)

So how do you eliminate pressure? You must always – always – remember the first rule of pressure:

The First Rule Of Pressure:

It is inherent in the buyer and seller interaction. You must assume there will always be pressure.

Some people choose to focus on building rapport first. That is a great mistake. Pressure is more fundamental. It is the first thing to address. Rapport cannot exist in the context of pressure. Pressure equals a low level threat to survival. It doesn't matter how friendly, flattering or like-minded you are. It doesn't matter how much you "match and mirror" them. It doesn't even matter how well and how intently you listen to them. None of that matters until you release the pressure – then building rapport matters a great deal.

Some of us were taught to focus on being "enthusiastic" about our product or service. We were told that our positive energy would help us sell. But, excitement and enthusiasm often come across as "Excitement that you will buy my product. Excitement that I might be able to help you." And that creates pressure. Premature excitement can scare people off. Don't try to "pre-excite yourself" or pump yourself up. Let enthusiasm and excitement arise naturally in the process. Or not. If you really aren't inspired or enthusiastic about working with someone — don't try to fake it. Most people can tell — and the ones who can't you will end up resenting you in the long term.

But, most of what we learn in sales is how to give our pitch — how to "close people." And that most certainly creates pressure. You have probably been taught not to trust in the power of a simple conversation.

After all, a genuine conversation could end up anywhere — they might buy from you and they might not. So, instead of an authentic interaction, we give them a canned presentation. We try to impose a linear, step-by-step model (that exists nowhere in nature) on a human dynamic that more often resembles a spiral (which we see everywhere in nature) moving ever closer inwards.

Not inwards towards the sale – but inwards towards the truth of whether it's a fit or not. When we keep our eye on the truth vs. the sale – people relax and open.

# Getting Real: Why Most Sales Training is Dehumanizing

*“Most people are silently asking the wrong question. They’re asking themselves, “Why is it that I am so seldom the person I want to be.” A better question would be, “Why is it I so seldom want to be the person I am.” The answer? Because you don’t believe it’s enough.”*

Oriah Mountain Dreamer

## Trying to Be Somebody:

Unfortunately, the bulk of sales training — and much of the world of personal development is based on a sort of “self pressuring”. We are often taught to try to appear or sound like someone who — in truth — we aren’t yet, and perhaps never will be.

Maybe you have attended a sales training or motivational speech — where you were told to “go for it!” — and then found yourself wishing you were more like that person. So many people are trying to “be somebody”. It’s possible to admire people with a certain style or who’ve accomplished a great deal while still having confidence that there is a very special and worthwhile somebody inside you.

A weak self-esteem can be temporary, we boosted by pretense — but it usually exhausts your spirit. Plus, it takes a great deal of energy to sustain an image when you’re having a conversation with someone. What would happen if, instead, you invested that energy into understanding the truth about the other person’s situation? Too many people feel phony when they’re selling.

Stop trying to be somebody who you aren’t. You’re just fine the way you are — really.

Putting on a false front can actually increase the feelings of insecurity they’re meant to mask. It can be very expensive to your own humanity. Plus: when you judge yourself for your weaknesses you also become incredibly judgmental of others.

Here’s a metaphor to help you out. Have you ever woken up in the morning and your arm was totally asleep? You couldn’t feel a thing. You couldn’t even move it. Obviously, you had slept on it and cut off the circulation. So, you start moving it, and massaging it to get the blood to flow back into the arm, don’t you? And how does it feel when you do that? I don’t know about you, but for me it feels extremely uncomfortable — almost painful.

So, why do we bother?

If we wake up with our arm numb, why don’t we simply put a tourniquet around our shoulder to make sure that the arm stays numb all day (then we don’t have to go through the painful waking up process.) After all, aren’t there some tremendous benefits to having your arm numb? What if

someone stabs you in the arm? You don't feel it! If somehow someone chopped off your arm? No problem! If it got slammed in the door? Who cares!

Hey, look at all those benefits! Who wouldn't want a numb arm?

Well, having a numb arm also comes with a few problems. Sure, you can't feel pain, but what if you put your hand on a burner without realizing it? You might not notice that your hand was on fire until it was too late. You might cut yourself while you were dicing vegetables and not realize it. You might bump into people without knowing you did it. And they might not like that. They might want to pick a fight. Even try to fight someone with a numb arm?

If your arm is awake — yes, it's going to be more sensitive to pain. Yes, it's going to feel uncomfortable waking up. But it will also allow you to pick things up, to caress the face of someone you love, to brush your hair. In fact, it is precisely the sensitivity of an awake arm that protects it from damage and makes it aware that it has damaged others.

In sales, most of us have adopted a mindset and practice a series of techniques, which keep us numb and unaware of what's happening around us. You might find yourself feeling like you're wearing a mask or like every day you put on your professional "sales jacket" and engage in conversations that, somehow, don't feel natural.

Our focus on "closing the sale" becomes like a set of blinders that horses wear in races. We can only look straight ahead. We can't look side to side. We only see what's in front of us. We get fixed on "the sale." We hope we get it. For some of us, this hope becomes a sort of drug. I call it "hopeium." We use it to stimulate us and give us energy. We meet with someone, we think the conversation goes well, we send them a proposal and we sit back and hope that it works out. Most salespeople have so many great possibilities "in the pipeline" that never end up working out. Somehow, right at the very end, we end up losing the sale to somebody else. And then we crash. We were up high and now we're down low. The bigger the deal that fell through, the more down and depressed we feel. How do we get out of our "low"? More "hopeium." It literally becomes addictive.

*"I feel much better now that I've given up hope."*

– Ashleigh Brilliant

The truth is, if we had been a little more sensitive to what was happening during the conversation — things could have turned out very differently.

*"Tolerating is essentially about desensitizing yourself. If you put some beautiful music on your stereo and suddenly a lot of racket fills the air — horns honking, people yakking, whatever — you're going to have to strain to tune out those unwanted noises. Part of your energy is going into hearing, part into not hearing. Since some of the musical notes are going to be of the same frequencies as the unwanted noises, you'll hear much less music. In the same way, tolerations make you block out a lot of life's happiness, just because you're trying not to be affected by what annoys you. Because*

*gaining the kind of life you want means becoming more sensitive, not less, tolerations have got to go! Only then will you have the maximum energy on tap for whatever is most important to you.*

*WHEN YOU TOLERATE: you and your work become mediocre. Your natural creativity is squelched. You are too often tired. WHEN YOU STOP: you'll be happier, more fun to be around! You won't be busy tending to ego bruises, so you have extra energy to express your values. You have the edge: you'll waste no energy stepping over and around things. The more you feel, the more you'll notice and respond to the many opportunities in the present."*

Thomas Leonard

When you stop drugging yourself with “hopeium” you start to sense things earlier than the average person. You get inklings — little pre-intuitive notions that allow you to respond earlier and more effectively to the truth of the situation.

Things like caffeine, alcohol, narcotics and refined sugar are proven numb-ers. So are overstimulating activities like watching television, overeating or other types of addiction. Sure, you might just be able to use them without experiencing any obvious problems. But, there I a potential problem. Your body’s natural ability to feel the present and give you “inklings” has been compromised.

This is something that is almost never covered in sales training: believing that your feelings are worthwhile. In fact, I suggest that they’re so worthwhile it’s worth being an expert on them. Given time, you might just come to rely on your “gut feelings” as much as you do the numbers, facts and statistics you come across.

“Being numb” and “hyping” in sales prevents you from feeling rejected but that comes at a heavy cost:

- It desensitizes you, which – ironically- cause us to behave in ways which bring more rejection...so you need more drugs.
- It prevents you from being present.
- Opportunities pass you by before you have a chance to respond to them.
- Your ignorance is perpetuated.
- You waste a great deal of time with unqualified leads.
- You have delayed reactions.
- You miss out on nuances and subtleties that could unlock a whole world of opportunities.
- You have to endure the constant emotional highs and lows.

Here’s the bottom line: the less sensitive, the more numbed out you are the less you are going to be aware of what’s actually happening around you.

It’s important here to differentiate between awareness and knowledge. So much of sales training is focused on “gathering knowledge”. Knowledge is based on facts, and information. Awareness means that you are present. You’re conscious of what’s really going on, both inside and outside of yourself. You’re “tuned in”.

In sales most people tend to focus almost exclusively on gathering knowledge. Both are critically important. Having a high level of both can be extremely powerful.

I'm not saying there aren't benefits to the old way of selling. There really are. I'm saying there are some tremendous benefits to living a numb life — but is that what you want?

I'm saying that there are far more benefits to being awake in life.

Yes, it makes you more sensitive to pain, but, magically, what you also find is that your sensitivity comes with many rewards.

### As You Sensitize Yourself:

- You begin to understand the signals your body is giving you, which allows you to make decisions more easily.
- You instantly sense when you have made a wrong turn in the conversation and can correct it quickly.
- You become masterful at qualifying people quickly and only spend significant time with high quality leads.
- You begin to hear what people aren't saying – what's being communicated between the lines.
- It makes you much more aware of your impact on other people — and that means you hurt them less — that means that when you hurt them or cause them to feel pressured you become conscious of it rapidly, and can make amends.
- It means that you learn from your life's experiences, very quickly instead of becoming an automaton — a juggernaut of unrelenting certainty. — it means you become more human. And that is a very, very beautiful thing.



# The Ten Levels of Resolving Sales Pressure

- 1. You realize that something isn't right.** You're doing what the sales trainer said to do, you're following your bosses' system... but something feels "off" and you can't quite place what it is. Almost every salesperson in the world is at this level.
- 2. You realize you are being lied to in code.** You start to realize that your leads and prospects are often getting rid of you with half truths like "Send me more information." or "Sounds great. Let me take it from here." Or "Call me back anytime on Friday."
- 3. You realize that they lied to you because they felt pressured.** This is a more profound realization than it may seem to be. Most sales training gives us the impression that prospects are merely being "resistant", "difficult", "stubborn", "dishonest" or "lazy". They are simply giving us "objections". But what's not mentioned is why they are doing these things. We're told that they are trying to push us away – but the truth is they are pushing back against the pressure they are perceiving or afraid to get from us. This realization is the heart of UTG. This understanding explains so much of the prospects behaviour that, until now, has simply seemed "difficult".
- 4. You realize that you were the cause of that pressure.** If you are at this level – you've likely listened to at least some of the UTG material but you haven't actually committed yourself to learning or applying it. But you are now starting to see your own role in it.
- 5. You begin to catch yourself pressuring people and you immediately correct it.** In first phases of level 5 you are shocked at how much you are using pressure on prospects to get the sale. But you are now noticing it as it happens and stopping it. This catches them entirely off-guard. After all, every other sales-person pushes harder at those moments. But you are backing off. You are immediately rewarded with a sense of relief from them – and more honesty.
- 6. You become masterful at diffusing pressure when it arises.** At this point, you almost feel excited when a client starts feeling pressured – because you know how to handle it. It no longer phases you if a client gets triggered or starts to misinterpret your actions based on painful past experiences. You feel unflappable. This makes you far more attractive.
- 7. You become masterful at creating spaces where pressure very rarely arises in the first place.** You realize that so much of the pressure comes from them seeing you as a salesperson. At this level – you become incredibly creative at looking at what you do before and after the "sales conversations" you have with your prospects and removing any pressure from those aspects as well.
- 8. You begin to question the entire notion of "pressuring people" to do things --** and now you include yourself amongst the people you are no longer willing to pressure. You likely find yourself more relaxed. At this point, you are likely beginning to notice all the ways that you're no longer pressuring your friends or family – and you notice how much happier they are to be around you. You feel more at ease – more comfortable in your own skin.

**9. You do all of the above and you catch pressure arising within yourself and diffuse it there first** - you notice that you're getting almost no pressure from outside. When you first approach this level, you begin to feel appalled at yourself – you can barely believe all of the ways you are pressuring yourself to get the sale. You realize that this underlying desperation has been the root of your problem all the time. You see how much of your sales work has been controlled by fear.

**10. You cease to even feel pressure inside.** It's no longer a conscious effort. It's who you are. You feel zero fear about making cold calls or approaching people about your business. You become a pressure free zone. You feel really at ease in your skin now. You feel excited about every conversation because you know that your agenda isn't to sell anything, it isn't to make them like you, it's to get to the truth.

# Four of the Most Client Repelling Traits A Service Provider Can Have

## Trait #1 - Arrogance

**Symptoms:** The practitioner acts as if they have found "the answer to all things". They treat clients as if they know everything and the client knows nothing. They talk 'at' instead of 'with' their clients. There's often a cynical attitude and they are quick to criticize others. Wanting to be the authority and have clients accept them as such. Not explaining what they are doing or why. Nor feeling the need to. Expecting the clients to just follow their recommendations blindly no matter the cost (financial or emotional) or what is involved. The energy behind it is often as if they are 'showing the client' how skilled they are with their intuition or healing skills. A 'one size fits all' approach. They act as though the client has done something wrong if their approach is not working for them. They make the client feel wrong if they don't do 'enough' on their end.

**Impact:** It feels like they are pushing and imposing their worldview on the client. Client feels shut down and unsafe.

**Opposite:** The client feels totally 100% accepted, as they are, where they are. The practitioner always takes the needed time to explain why they are suggesting a certain course of action, and why they are recommending the brands they are.

The practitioner is open about their experiences treating problems like the clients both good and bad. They are honest about their abilities to help - they don't say 'this works for all' as the client knows that is not possible and different things work for different people. Even when there is disagreement, the client can FEEL the practitioner's integrity. They speak to the client like one human being to another. Their authority comes from the client's experience of the practitioner's own history, experience and earned wisdom. The client feels really, really listened to.

The client can feel the result of years of the practitioner's inner work and to be genuinely comfortable in their own skin. If the practitioner shares stories of themselves it's for understanding and sharing, not for their own 'venting' time.

## The Trait #2 - Lack of Sensitivity to Needs and Feelings

**Symptoms:** Not checking in. Touching without consent. Doing something with the client without giving context or explaining first (e.g. 'you have a terrible knot in your back. I can't leave it there!' and continuing without pause). Not noticing the power dynamic of patient and client. Assuming that the client wants to hear their opinions, perceptions and suggestions. The physical environment being set up without any consideration for the client. The practitioner telling the client some very disturbing things as though they weren't a big deal.

Treating clients as though they are so lucky to have received this unexpected pain or bad news from them in the quest for healing. No empathy to the impact of their actions. Talking badly of other kinds of people to the clients - not considering that the client might fit into that group. A general sense of carelessness in their actions. This lack of sensitivity can lead to clients being made to feel ashamed that they even have health problems in the first place.

**Impact:** Clients feel surprised, shocked and shut down. This attitude comes across as rude and careless. Client feels totally unimportant to this woman that their needs and comfort levels are not being respected

(or even considered). This often results in a clients feeling humiliated as they do things for the practitioner vs. themselves.

Clients often look to practitioners as authority figures and there needs to be responsibility on behalf of the practitioner to recognize this. Forcing a client to have to advocate for him or herself in the middle of some treatment debacle from a supposed professional is the worst kind of victimization since they have come to you for help and have conceded their vulnerability and your expertise.

**Opposite:** Before beginning, the practitioner asking if the client if they want them to describe what they are doing as they work or if they just want him to work in silence. When something strikes a nerve in the patient - they pause and acknowledge the intensity of the experience.

## The Trait #3 - Self Involved

**Symptoms:** The therapist spends a good chunk of the session going on about their own issues. They do not invite comments with regard to the client's level of understanding. It feels like the practitioner takes a lack of progress or disagreement personally.

**Impact:** It doesn't feel like the practitioner's attention is on the client at all. The client's need for respect is not met. The session becomes more about the practitioner than the paying client.

**Opposite:** The practitioner is an enlightened witness. They're a kind and non-judgmental presence. The clients feels acknowledged for their part in the healing journey. That the client is an active part of the healing and just seeing the practitioner for some support. They are not the experts "doing onto the client."

## The Trait - #4 "Desperate for Business"

**Symptoms:** Pressuring clients into booking more sessions (even if they just can't afford it). Giving away free sessions and then, when they don't become clients, being hurt and slightly angry that they gave their session away for free.

**Impact:** she seemed to come across as a bit desperate for clients.

**Opposite:** the client truly feels that their best interests are being held in mind. The practitioner refers out generously when someone else can handle the problem better.

## 28 Holistic Practitioner Horror Stories

1. “Stupid comments in the name of 'being helpful'. Example: massage therapist looking at my chart in disbelief and saying '*you don't look your age but your muscles feel it*' - am I supposed to feel good or bad? Chiropractor jokingly calling me an 'old girl' doesn't cut it either - we have a joking relationship but some things a practitioner shouldn't joke about.”
2. “I took my son (exhibiting Multiple Chemical Sensitivity) at age 12 to a well-known homeopath in Edmonton area ... the practice is in her home. We arrived, put \$225 on the table and proceeded. We received a consult and remedies that were like gibberish to us (we had never had homeopathy before) but I was completely filled with hope. I tried my darndest to get this cute kid to take his drops every day, twice a day. He hated me, resented me and we basically wasted \$225 on this. I was the wrong person to focus on for this treatment, it was the 12 year old. Today, he refuses to attend any of my "freak therapists" even though his Ck factor is 150, he is chemically sensitive and in general, exhibits symptoms she mentioned in our appt. Trouble is, I was not the patient, my son (now almost 16 years old) was. Not love or money will take him back. It is a lost opportunity due to of misplaced communication. I got it, he did not. I was the one with the cheque book. Today if someone mentions homeopathy, I remember clearly my son's comments of cynicism, I wonder if he is not correct? I hear the word "quack" and I remember this experience. I know for a fact that I did not think that but I think it now. The issue was not homeopathy, it was connection and communication.”
3. “I went with my "other half" to a Craniosacral appointment. The appointment was his, I was just tagging along because we had been running some errands and he didn't have time to drop me off at home. This practitioner was extremely rude towards me. I don't know if it was because I was watching my boyfriend's session or not, but I thought she was not nice and certainly not welcoming. We arrived early for his session, and as her office door was locked and there was nowhere to sit, I chose to sit on the floor as my back was bothering me that day. She walked around the corner to where we were waiting and she shakes his hand and then proceeds to look at me as though I was some kind of homeless, drunk person that was begging for change on the street. It wasn't anything she said to me, it was just the "vibe" that she gave me. It was obvious that she was looking down her nose at me. My boyfriend felt that energy as well. Before the session began, I had a few questions as I had been considering taking a Craniosacral course for some time now and looking for a practitioner myself. She answered my questions no problem, but with such an attitude of arrogance and rudeness that I felt like the lowest form of life on Earth. For the remainder of the session, I kept my mouth shut, but the energy she gave off toward me did not change a bit. Anytime she looked over at me, it was as if she were trying to bore a hole in my chest. It was obvious that she really didn't like me for some reason, though I never did figure out what set her off. Needless to say, even though I had been looking for a decent Craniosacral practitioner to see, I never booked a session with her, and never plan to. She was rude and arrogant, simply because I was sitting in on my boyfriend's session.”

4. "I had a practitioner once who spent the whole time talking about their day and I didn't feel like their attention was on me at all."
5. "I have had several bad experiences with yoga instructors. 1) I was in a class where it was obvious that the instructor was using the class to fit in her own workout, regardless whether or not she had students and their level of comfort. She only taught through demonstration, she rarely made comments about our technique or posture. She did not invite comments and answered questions without regard to our level of understanding. I took 4 classes and stopped going (it was a series of eight). 2) I was taking an introduction to yoga class with an instructor I didn't know. At the very first class she was bound and determined to have us all try standing on our heads (well, being inverted anyways) using chairs under each shoulder to support us. I was an overweight and 45 year old at the time. I repeatedly said I did not want to do that and she was very insistent on having me try. I felt totally unimportant to this woman. She was not there to respect my needs, comfort level, etc. She had found "the answer to all things" in inverted postures and she was going to ram it down our throats for our own good. I did not go back to that class. Even now, several years later, my cheeks get hot just thinking about it! After that last class, I have never tried another yoga class with any instructor at any facility. I could use the exercise, but I choose not to put myself in a position of being injured or humiliated to serve someone else's needs."
6. "Ashamed for wasting my time and my money: promises, promises - they're going to cure every disease or ache I ever had with their miracle pill or juice or incantation. That's not reality - just admit what the limits of what you are doing are; don't promise the eternal fountain of health. Turn-offs: Inappropriate touching/meddling tops the list here. Don't touch anyone without their permission - and that includes permission per location on the body! Invading personal space qualifies as icky, too! The clients can feel your intent - surprise! Forcing a client to have to advocate for him or herself in the middle of some treatment debacle from a supposed professional is the worst kind of victimization since they have come to you for help and have conceded their vulnerability and your expertise."
7. "The worst I've witnessed is when I saw a practitioner touch the client without asking permission first, nor explaining the reason for doing so. The client was very uncomfortable, but seemed somewhat reassured that there was a third party present just in case."
8. "I had a massage therapist who would work on whatever parts of my body she felt needed it most rather than what I came in asking for. I often left feeling unsatisfied and frustrated. I had a yoga teacher for one class who was obviously uncomfortable with me. When I identified as blind and asked her to pay more attention than usual to being verbal, she got a bit brusque and doubtful. She said she'd try, but it was clear I was making her life more difficult. In the end, she did all right, but her obvious reluctance made me feel as though I'd asked for her first born. I had another yoga teacher who was otherwise good, but very forceful. When she touched me to correct my posture, she was too energetic and directive/bossy."

9. "Condescension/acting like they are "god-touched" or too sacred."
10. "I went to see an herbalist/iridologist who wasn't warm or friendly but had a lot of knowledge and was known to be very good at her work. She gave me some very strict dietary guidelines to follow - basically changed my whole life while taking care of a newborn baby. So when I went back for follow-up I was quite proud of myself for doing so well - not perfect but I made some good steps toward a healthier diet. She looked into my eyes (iridology) and asked me what my compliance to her diet was. I said, 'about 85%.' She said in a harsh, judgmental tone, with pursed lips, 'How about 50!' I felt tiny and like a really 'bad' client. Totally deflated. I don't care what her reputation and credentials were - I never went back there. (Nor did I tell her or the store who hosted her why.) Aside from this she gave me long lists of supplements that cost a small fortune. At the time it felt like a cash-grab, but now as a practitioner I understand what she was doing. (Definitely not a cash- grab.) Perhaps an explanation about why I needed these or why she was choosing the brands she did would have helped me feel better about buying them."
11. "The floor was squishy with many layers of carpets. I thought there might not be a solid bottom. The waiting area was cramped. It was not private. He answered calls while with me. The place smelled like old skin. He yammered on about his own issues."
12. "I once received an amazing Craniosacral treatment. This healer's touch was firm yet compassionate. When working with my head, I experienced a release. At the time it felt like a jolt, like when I'm falling asleep and my nerves start twitching so I wake-up suddenly. I hadn't experience anything like this before in a massage so asked 'what just happened?' Her response was brief. She suggested I take some time for myself after the treatment and relax in the park across the street. I didn't understand what had just happened to me and felt open, confused and vulnerable. I lay in that park for a long while. The rest of my day...I felt spaced out. I needed more dialogue from her. I'm a psycho-physical being. If I have a physical release, my emotions and psyche are connected to that transformation. I needed an enlightened witness, someone observing me, to guide me when in the dark."
13. "Early on in my exploration of holistic practices, I went for a massage to a male therapist. This was a stretch for me, but he had a good reputation, which gave me more confidence. In the middle of the massage, as I was lying on my back, he removed the towel which was covering my torso, leaving me lying there naked. I was too surprised and uncertain to comment or insist on the towel being replaced, but of course I never went back. If that happened today, I would make a strong comment and get up off the table and leave."
14. "I went for a card reading, which was full of bad news and threats. Because this was at the very beginning of my spiritual journey, I didn't know what to think, but felt scared for quite some time. Of course, none of what she said came true, but aside from the lack of accuracy of the reading, I now know there are ways to deliver bad news that convey inherent opportunities for growth. Readings are a powerful tool, and it is important to convey information with respect and compassion. I have been in a number of situations with practitioners of one sort or another where they treated me like they knew everything and I knew nothing. I would never



return to such a person.”

15. “One foot reflexology guy I went to just told me that the more pain I experienced the better and to keep on screaming if I needed to. This really made it tough for me to walk for the rest of the week and terrified my trust center. I really felt violated after the session.”
16. “A guy I went to decided that I needed to go through a ‘pretend attack’ so I could learn to fight back. Instead I totally froze and barely made it home. I felt very disrespected.”
17. “I went to a holistic clinic to get a live blood analysis done. At first I thought the lady was very nice and she explained a lot of things to me about my health. She also told me some very disturbing things as though they weren't a big deal. Then she said she was going to give me a treatment that I had never heard of before. Before I knew it I was lying on a table being hooked up to a machine that I had no idea what it was. At first, it was ok. Not ok as in pleasurable, but ok as in bearable. Within a few minutes this machine was giving me severe shocks to the point where my muscles would spaz out and I couldn't speak. I called for the practitioner but she didn't come for a few minutes. Then when she finally came it was again, no big deal! She said she would turn down the machine and again she left me alone to be shocked. I still have no idea what the hell that machine was for! She came in and treated me as though I was so lucky to have received this unknown shock therapy, then sent me on my way. I went out to the lobby to pay and get the herbal treatment that she prescribed. When I got up to the till my total was \$589.00. My jaw dropped and I started to cry. I did not have that kind of money, but after the little chat we had about my health I felt like I needed this treatment because I was so sick! On a side note, I wasn't sick at all. In fact, I was and still am a very healthy and energetic person! I took a look at the treatment and it was for about 25 different ‘problems’ that I supposedly had. I honestly had no idea what they were all for. So I asked the receptionist to give me the most important ones. In the end I was out about \$300. I left there feeling like I had just been robbed! I cried all the way home and later I told a friend who was training to become a holistic practitioner about it and she was horrified about the whole situation. She said that no matter how sick someone is you would never give them that many things to work out at once!! I didn't end up taking the herbal treatment at all, and instead started to see a naturopath/homeopath who was recommended by a friend and has 30 years experience. When I leave my new doctor's office I feel healthy and vibrant. Even if my health isn't 100% he assures me that I will be back on track in no time. He has never once given me a list of my problems and \$600 worth of strange herbs. I will NEVER go to see a "holistic practitioner" AGAIN. The only people I will trust my health and my family's health is a DOCTOR. The experience left me feeling like homeopaths are quacks. I will however, go for massages.”
18. “When they ask me in follow up visits if anything got better and I feel as though I have to say something positive or I have somehow failed. When they act as though I have done something wrong if their approach is not working for me. They need to be willing to work thru different approaches to find something that works. I hate it when they don't openly let me know cost upfront before we decide to follow thru with treatment - some expect you to just follow their recommendations blindly no matter the cost or what is involved.”

19. “1. My worst experience with an energy practitioner. Prior to starting the she session scanned my body with her hand and proceeded to tell me everything that was going on ... this is going on here, you're ... here, and oh there's your grief etc. It felt disrespectful. The energy behind it was as if she was 'showing me' how skilled she was with her intuition. Which was more about her than myself, the client. I have experienced practitioners who are not sensitive in how they share information and I don't recall being asked if I wanted to hear their perceptions. I often do want to hear but I can think of practitioners I have been to where that was not what I was going to them for but the information was offered anyways.
2. Once I had a massage practitioner say to me, while working on a tight area of my back that this could turn into cancer if it stayed or didn't get worked on. I didn't put a lot of stock in it at the time but I was angry after that they felt entitled to say something so bold, what if I had really internalized that. The fear would be enough to translate a supposed healing session into a stressful situation for my body. There was/is no indication this person was correct but even if they were I don't feel that is a professional way to deal with it. It feels like an abuse of the power dynamic. Clients often look to practitioners as authority figures and there needs to be responsibility on behalf of the practitioner to recognize this.
3. I have had practitioners share 'too much information'. To the point where they are going on talking and talking about the issue or problem but they have lost me and my eyes have glazed over and I feel I am being 'talked at'. They have lost me, the client and the session has become more about them, what they know or their agenda. This is especially bad when they are using technical jargon or can't seem to find a language to relate to me.”
20. “This is a story related to me by a recent client. Her husband had bought her a massage gift certificate for her birthday while they were on a holiday. She just wanted to enjoy a beautiful relaxation massage. When she went to the salon the therapist then told her, ‘you have a terrible knot in your back. I can't leave it there!’ Then gave her an extremely deep tissue massage, which was agony at the time, and left her bruised. She was sick for three days afterwards while she was on her holiday! Her experience was so traumatic for her that it was years before she would even consider getting another massage. She only happened to come to see me because she was already in agony.”
21. “This was my first professional massage. And this is years ago. Being there was no practitioner in my small town I had to make the appointment - drive 2.5 hours (I lived way up north) I called to make the appointment and she asked me a few questions on the phone one being ‘How much do you weigh?’ I was feeling heavy at 130 pounds but I replied, and she said ok that is fine. When she was massaging me she mentioned how she hated touching fat people and that is why she asked my weight, and she went on and on about it - well I had been feeling FAT and thru the whole massage I felt creepy, devastated and untouchable. I was a young married woman with 2 children at that time - with a body image challenge. I swore if I

was ever in the health care field - I would not treat anyone like they were less than me.”

22. “My partner and I got a free sample session that this one practitioner was offering as a way to gain some new clients. The session itself was awesome and a lot of work was done. At the end of the session, she asked us when we would like to book another session, which in and of itself, was okay. But she started to pressure us into booking something else. We just couldn't afford it. Also, I was into doing another session with my partner, but he wasn't. She reacted in a way where it felt like she was taking it personally. It wasn't really obvious that she was doing this, but I could feel this tension in the air that smelled kind of like she was hurt and slightly angry that she had given her session away for free (which was the offer she was giving everyone) and she didn't get a booking out of it. She called a while later (maybe a few weeks) and asked me again if we would like to continue with more sessions. Again, this I can understand, but the answer was still the same from my partner - he wouldn't go for it. And again, it was the same reaction from her. I just felt really uncomfortable about the whole situation. So much so, that even if I had the extra money to get a session with her - I wouldn't. I'd go somewhere else.”
23. “I had a reading with a lady at a trade show in Calgary that left me feeling like I had wasted my money. I decided to get a reading from her because I had attended a lecture by her that had lead me to believe that she was really good at what she did. When I spoke to her at her booth, she seemed to come across as a bit desperate for clients, but I chose to ignore that gut feeling. (Lesson - always go with your first gut feeling). I sat down to get my reading for \$20. She seemed to be in a rush to get through my reading, so much so that I couldn't even remember what she told me by the end. And all I got for my \$20 was a 5-minute reading. Not to mention that what she told me wasn't anything I couldn't have figured out on my own. At the end of the reading, she was very abrupt and without actually saying the words, it felt energetically like she was almost shoving me out of the booth so she could get more clients. I will never go back to her again.”
24. “I am a reflexologist & the person who taught me reflexology was a wonderful, witty, caring person. But when she got several of us in the field I am in today, which is a Business Affiliate with TriVita, a vitamin company, she was not a good leader. She was not there for us, did not help train us, and was not supportive. I am still with TriVita in spite of her, but my confidence levels are shaky. I have appointed someone else as a coach, but she is in Nanaimo. I think the best way to describe the instructor as I (& several others) see her is arrogance. She became a top leader very quickly, then turned around & criticized the company & she does not "walk her talk". Instead of the fun, friendly person she was, she seems to have become cynical, & quick to criticize. Sad.”
25. “Once I saw this massage therapist who spoke to me a lot about her son, who she was having troubles with. Then, she kept telling me I reminded her of him. I got this weird feeling she was using me as a surrogate son, like she couldn't heal her son, so she was putting her healing energy into me instead. It didn't feel clean. Oh, and she was also going on about the Mayan calendar and what it meant, and how we were all going to ascend and leave our bodies. I felt like she was pushing her world view on me.”

26. “My very first experience with a massage was horrible and had kept me away from trying others for many years (admittedly the cost was often a difficulty, but I was not motivated to find a way around that). The massage was in a room that had a bubbling fish tank. Maybe it was suppose to be soothing, but I found it distracting. The massage person had music playing - Send in the Clowns! The whole environment was not set up for me, and she did not ask if I would like anything changed. If she did, I'm not sure if I would have said anything. Everything was already set up and going. I don't think I would have asked her to change it, especially being new to the experience. The actual massage was not very motivated, or maybe I was already so far removed, it just fell flat. Afterward I felt like I wasted my money and time.”
27. “I left the care of an Osteopath because she was abrupt and confrontational with me. She wanted to be the authority and have me accept her as such. This was not the emotionally safe and sensitive treatment that I expected. The fees were high and the results did not justify continuing. Someone less trained has become my trusted practitioner-better emotional safety and better physical results.”
28. “The things I have experienced that have turned me off or away, is when a practitioner brings their problems into the session I am paying for. Talking about their problems, or talking about their judgments of life, people, situations. I do not mind the sharing of life experiences, except when it takes a negative turn, and especially if it becomes more about the practitioner than myself as the paying client.”

# 15 Holistic Practitioner Success Stories

1. “I booked a session with someone I know who practices belief re-patterning. We were doing a trade for services. She came to my home to do the session, which was wonderful. She took me through the process with patience, and compassion. Part of the technique involves muscle-testing, which I sometimes have problems with. She easily adapted, as was able to help me to change what I needed to change so that we could get clear responses. About half way through my session, I started feeling some strong emotions come up. For me, depending on the practitioner I'm working with, I may or may not feel comfortable expressing, especially if I feel the need to cry. She made me feel very comfortable about feeling whatever I was feeling and expressing in whatever way was appropriate for me. She was very gentle, kind, and compassionate. I would book another session with her anytime.”
2. “I went to see an SI practitioner and it was wonderful how he told me when he noticed things free up as he worked. In fact, before he began, he had asked me if I wanted him to describe what he was doing as he worked or if I just wanted him to work in silence. He made sure I was warm and comfortable, and he was very gentle and confident in how he worked with touch.”
3. “The best practitioners I've been to don't try to sell me on their techniques. They listen to my concerns, my priorities and they offer what they can to help. They do not: 1) Try to scare me into using their services. 2) Tell me that whatever I've been doing so far has not helped and/or made things worse. 3) Tell me that their modality is the ONE and ONLY of any value.”
4. “In 4th year I was dealing with many cold doctors who offered no hope at all for my intestinal disease. I was emaciated and very sick, in constant pain. Finally my mom sent me to an elderly man she knew who did some kind of holistic healing. It felt like voo-doo or something at the time but I didn't care; I was desperate and knew there was a way to heal this - I just didn't know how yet. This man had a very humble office in his home, but it was definitely a treatment room and felt professional. He did all this strange stuff (now it doesn't seem strange at all but it sure did then!) like muscle testing and asked seemingly irrelevant questions (I know better about that now too). Anyway, after about a 1/2 hour he said I had "Candida" (what the hell is that I thought?) and needed to take these potions and follow a strict diet for a few months. His recommendations were reasonable and doable. He charged very little for this and within 2 weeks I had my life back! Totally feeling good and I've never been sick like that again. What really stands out for me is his kind & compassionate mannerism and the simplicity of his work and treatment. I have no idea what his educational background is and didn't even think to ask because my mom sent me to him so I guess I just trusted her. Now this seems remarkable to me because who's more into education and credentials than a pre-med student!?! Of course this experience probably shines because I had such an extraordinary & fast recovery from a condition that several fancy specialists said I'd just have to learn to deal with. Even so, he just seemed wise and grounded to me and very uncluttered in his approach, mannerism, space etc.”

5. “I've found the divine and perfect healer for me. She is an enlightened witness. That's exactly what I need, someone to observe my faulty habitual physical, emotional and psychological patterns and guide me through my shit so I can come out brighter and lighter. I don't want someone pulling and pushing at me. I've had yoga teachers, while I'm in an asana come up behind me and adjust by pulling me about, taking me out of balance and invading my space. Gentle! I don't need someone assuming a superior role, thinking they know what I need. My teacher sets out the conditions or choices I have to choose from. This choice, for example, will help you move forward. This choice will reveal that you are not ready to let go but that's OK as long as you are conscious of the pattern. Awareness is key. Maybe the next time I'll choose something different. I feel empowered and conscious of my choices on the mat and off the mat. I feel more compassion for myself when I see a habitual pattern come out.”
6. “I have several practitioners I visit on a regular basis. On the top of my list of criteria is that they respect my journey and not think, or treat me like, they have all the answers and I have none. The practitioners I visit treat me as an equal, consult me about my boundaries and perceptions, and share their expertise with me rather than imposing it on me. When I visit them, I feel we are taking a healing journey together. I don't feel that they are rescuing me.”
7. “I have been to several practitioners who have helped me change my life. The characteristics they have in common are: 1. They are heart open people who share rather than shove what they have to say. 2. If they have any questions about me being blind, they've just come out and asked them instead of trying to pretend they know everything. 3. They have accepted my feedback, particularly regarding my pain level. Rather than telling me: "no pain, no gain baby" they have been responsive, backed off the intensity, and let me relax into a deeper space and then maybe I could accept more intense work.”
8. “Visits to several Maharishi Ayurvedic Consultants gave me a great experience in the sense that I felt wonderful afterwards, with knowledge I could use to genuinely improve my holistic health in an enjoyable way. One would start in a very friendly informal way discussing my life in an unquestioning manner so that I was put totally at ease and then answering my questions sincerely and thoroughly. Another was able to respond to my enjoyment and add to it- Ayurvedic Consultations involve pulse diagnosis. I laughed because it felt like he was playing the piano- on my wrist as it were- the way I was used to, having played the piano in the past. He stopped and added an amusing phrase- something like how this is what life is- we just have to learn how to play with our physiologies in the right way to make the right music come out. That made me laugh even more. And in subsequent consultations we were still able to remember and laugh about that joke. Music was something I could relate to- and I could understand better the importance of following his instructions- to create a better life for myself.”
9. “I felt listened to. They took the time to get to know my problem and try to figure it out. I didn't feel rushed. I was treated as an individual rather than just another client. Practitioners with

one-size fits all approaches turn me off. They were open about their experiences treating problems like mine both good and bad. They were honest about their abilities to help me - didn't say this works for all as i know that is not possible and different things work for different people.”

10.“My best experience of seeing a practitioner (sorry I don't have a specific example) is leaving the session and feeling they have acknowledged my part in the healing journey. That I am an active part of my healing and I am seeing them for support. They are not the experts 'doing onto me'.”

13.“I had a session with a Shamanic practitioner at the Body, Soul and Spirit Expo who was amazing in so many ways. I was having a really hard time financially at the time, and couldn't afford to pay what he was charging for a session. I knew intuitively that he would be worth the money, I just didn't have it. I spoke with a lady who was working at his booth booking his sessions, and she said she would speak to him for me to see if he would be willing to help out in some way. He offered to give me a session in the traditional native way where you give an offering of tobacco. I gratefully accepted! Fortunately there was a booth where I could get some. I did the session with him, and even though it was only a half an hour and my payment was in tobacco, he gave me his all. I had the best session I think I've ever had with any practitioner. I healed what felt like lifetimes of "stuff" in only a half hour session. Tremendous kindness, compassion and wisdom. He was great! I knew that his only motivation was to serve and to help heal others. I spent the rest of the weekend telling everyone they had to get a session with him and would recommend him to anyone and everyone. I will also go back to him anytime! He was amazing.”

14.“The practitioner was traditional healer, in other words a herbalist, shaman, therapist. We were doing something akin to counseling. It is hard for me put my finger on what exactly she did that made me feel so great. I just had the genuine feeling that she was there to help me without trying too hard. You know there are people that don't seem to give a shit about you, and then those that are burning to "help" you, which feels more like them forcing their opinions and philosophies on you. You get the feeling in both situations that this person is too wrapped up in themselves to genuinely be able to help you. And let me tell you, this practitioner wasn't just telling me things I wanted to hear. I was literally having my mind blown, and it wasn't always pleasant. My whole way of thinking was being challenged. My subconscious fears were being brought to the surface. I was extremely vulnerable. Sometimes, I would get angry. However, the whole way through I felt like I was being supported. Even when we disagreed, I could FEEL her integrity. She didn't put on airs or use too much spiritual mumbo jumbo, even though the experience was very spiritual. She spoke to me like one human being to another. You could sense the authority of her experience and wisdom, but she was not arrogant or pushy. I really, really felt listened to. I'd like to add that people don't always want to know what it will take to heal, so practitioners always run the risk of alienating their patients when they give it to them straight. However, a really good practitioner, like in the one in the above experience, is able to gauge what their patient/client is ready to hear and nudge them along while supporting them. PS: I feel like this would be a hard thing for a practitioner to learn in a marketing type seminar.

I feel like it's the result of years of inner work and genuinely being comfortable in their own skin. However, if you can do it, you are a genius.”

15. “Some weeks my body is pretty tight and I find it embarrassing since I'm a yoga teacher. A good practitioner will ask me about what is going on in my life, considering my life, body, mind in a holistic fashion (not just isolating muscles) and not make me feel bad about having tension and needing body work.”
16. “When someone is working on my body, it's very important that I feel safe and the experience is uncomplicated. The practitioner that I consistently return to listens to me and takes my requests and the information that I provide as valuable to his care for me. He never makes me feel wrong, or that I am not doing enough on my own.”
17. “I have had the best experiences with practitioners who make space for me and my healing. One's who were aware of my needs on all levels. Especially when I felt they could really hold the space for me to process, good or bad, where I felt I had someone who would listen, and also hold me accountable to my own healing and gently guide me there if I was off track. I cannot think of actual examples, but more how they held space for me and my healing or relaxation. In those moments it was about me, and if they shared stories of themselves it was for understanding and sharing, not for their time.”



*Excerpts from*

# The Principles of Preeminence

By Tad Hargrave of Marketing for Hippies

People don't want information. They want guidance. That's really the heart of it.

*"It is a mistake to believe the great leader is above others.  
The sea, greater than the river, lies below, open and receptive."  
- Tao Te Ching*

When you begin to apply the Principles Of Preeminence in your business, everything will change.

You will instantly stand out ... establish iron-clad credibility ... and claim the dominant position of trust among your prospects – so they ...

- Look to you for valuable and credible advice and guidance ...
- Search you out and come to your web pages voluntarily – eliminating the need for you to spend a fortune for online advertising
- Eagerly open every e-mail and read every blog posting and web page you post – and everything you send them through the mail ...
- Implicitly trust you and every marketing message you send them ...
- Enthusiastically act on your recommendations to purchase your products, and ...
- Send your open rates, conversion rates, sales revenues and profits through the roof.

You will attract a higher quality of client, you'll lose your fear and resistance to sales, you'll sleep better at night and find your passion for your business reawakened during the day.

The more you not only apply but embody these principles the more you will stand out in the minds of all those you serve as the very best there is. The preeminent choice.

## Principle 1:

### Falling in Love: Serve Clients, Don't Sell Customers

#### DISTINCTIONS:

- **Customer:** someone who buys a product or service
- **Client:** someone under the care, protection or guidance of a fiduciary

Consider carefully the difference between those two words because this distinction forms the philosophical core of the Principles of Preeminence. The question before the house is this:

*“Do you want to sell customers or do you want to serve clients?”*

If you are willing to step up into a new level of impeccability in your business conduct then read on.

*“These businesses have learned to cultivate and feel an enormous empathy, respect and love for their clients. They felt it was of supreme importance to honestly be able to say to them “I feel what you feel. I understand your problems.” They were able to articulate their pain better than their clients could. They saw it as their job to affirm to them that their suspicions were indeed correct that, “You are not being told the entire truth. There is a better way.” They understood that most people inherently don't like and don't trust ‘the system’.”*

**Jay Abraham**

Let's start at with the bottom line . . .

**You need to understand what they truly need at the deepest level – to help them gain clarity on what they truly want and then develop a clear strategy to get them that. You need to love them so much that you want to get the biggest and best possible outcomes for them.**

Most people make the tragic mistake of falling in love with their business – rather than their client. You must do the opposite. An easy way to do this is to choose to serve those you *already* love. Before you even get into business – decide who it is you most love and would most want to serve and then it's easy. It's much easier to serve those you *already* love then to *fall* in love. But if the people you're serving are not people with whom you are already in love – then start paying more attention to everything that is great and wonderful about them. Most businesses see their customers as numbers.

They *hate* being seen as a “number”.

Most people feel static and out of connection. They really want to believe that a much better way than the mainstream approach. Just look at the success of the movie phenomenon “The Matrix”. It deeply struck a chord in the psyche of our culture. It spoke to that nagging suspicion that something is fundamentally wrong with society – that the basis and very structure of society might be a lie. Most people feel this way.

Your role is to be the embodiment of a vision of something better. Most people, in the back of their minds, have the sneaking suspicion that there must be a more fulfilling, natural and easy way to do things.

*"Someday you'll find out that there is far more happiness  
in another's happiness than in your own. It is something I cannot explain,  
something within that sends a glow of warmth all through you."*

**Honore de Balzac**

If you ask for people's business from any place other than service and inspiration - you will feel diminished. You will feel reduced to mere sales.

*"Ultimately, it is not our credentials, but our commitment to a higher  
purpose that creates our effectiveness in the world."*

**Marianne Williamson**

*"The leaders in pre-eminent businesses know that their role isn't to simply 'hock their wares' but rather to  
nurturously guide their clients on a journey from where they are to a better place. These pre-eminent businesses saw  
themselves as their clients' champion, ombudsman, defender, and shield. It was of the most supreme importance to  
them that their clients felt their immense respect and empathy for them."*

**Jay Abraham**

And, as you go about serving your clients impeccably, there are two important phrases that you would do well to emblazon into the center of your mind:

**You must never, ever let your clients buy more than they need (without sharing, as persuasively as you can, why they DON'T need it).**

**You must never, ever let your clients buy less than they need (without sharing, as persuasively as you can, why they DO need it).**

Now, most people don't have a problem with the first one.

After all, isn't that just ethical thing to do?

If you see someone buying more than they need to, you stop them and tell them, "you don't really need this". That seems to make sense for most people as a strategy for maintaining long-term loyalty. Most of us have had experiences of people who were so focused on our own well-being than they actually cost themselves time, money or energy in the short-term. We start to realize that forever is much more important than today, when you start to see your relationship with your client as a long-term one, not simply a one-shot transactional deal, this sort of thinking makes a lot of sense. It deepens trust immensely because people see you aren't just trying to sell them something - you have their best interests in mind.

However, most people have a very difficult time with the second statement.

Let's look at it again:

**You must never, ever let your clients buy less than they need (without sharing, as persuasively as you can, why they do need it).**

Oooohhh.

Now people's defenses get up. "But I would *never* push someone. I could never manipulate someone or make someone buy more than they need." But stop. Two important things:

1. This isn't about making them buy *more* than they need. This is about ensuring that they do not buy *less* than they need.
2. This isn't about forcing people into anything. This isn't about dishonouring people by disrespecting their freedom to choose. You always give people freedom to say "no" and respect them when they do. You can still be sensitive to how pressured they are feeling. You can still communicate with elegance and profound caring.

This isn't about being controlling. It's about being real and straight with people about what it's REALLY going to take for them to achieve their goals – from *your* a trusted advisor perspective. And in truth, you may know more in that area than they do.

Remember, they're a *client*, not a customer. You're not a dime a dozen salesperson. You aren't just a "holding-area for products." You aren't just a fountain of wisdom. You are an empathic, a trusted advisor and trusted advisor. It's not about the sale – it's about taking them on a journey from where they want and need to be. If they're buying less than it will take to get there – you need to be honest about that.

You do people no favours by lying to them.

You do people no favours by letting them walk into the lion's den.

Imagine a friend packing her car for a drive across the Sahara desert. She wants to save money and so only buys one gallon of extra gas and one gallon of water. Won't she get hurt? Isn't it dangerous for her? As a friend, would you let her do that? If she went despite your protestations – wouldn't you follow her with extra water and gas so when she broke down you'd be there?

Or – vice versa – it's a short trip and she wants to buy so much more than she needs for it.

Wouldn't you *tell* her?

## Principle 3:

### Become A Trusted Advisor – Not Just an Authority

People don't want information. Ultimately, they want guidance.

If you think you're selling them a product or a service - think again. You are selling them a point of view; a perspective.

Let me explain: they are suffering from whatever symptoms they have (e.g. not enough clients, lower back pain, an angry wife threatening divorce, inability to get pregnant).

But - why do they have this problem? And what will it take to fix it?

Does it make sense to you that there are a myriad of ways to solve any problem? Dozens of lenses to even put on it? And, does it make sense that the lens you put on it might shape the treatment you offer?

Let's take the general example of 'illness'. There are many theories on what causes it:

An inconsistency between the will of the soul and the will of the personality:

- Karma
- Genetics
- Bad diet
- Stress
- Excessive acidity in the system
- Fear

Etc. I know some people who think that what you eat is almost irrelevant to your health. I know others who think that food is the only thing that matters.

Here's the point for you: what is YOUR perspective on why your clients are struggling with their challenges? What's your point of view? What's your opinion and perspective?

Here's what people want:

1. **Empathy** and understanding for their symptoms
2. A clear, well thought out **point of view** on why they have these symptoms that doesn't cause them to feel ashamed and stupid. Something that makes sense to them.

### 3. Clear and personalized **guidance** on what to do about it.

Your job is to do those three things.

Your job is to make your case as to why your perspective is correct. Not to convince them - but just so they understand where you're coming from and what kind of help they're likely to get from you. You can't just say, "Take these pills." First they need empathy. Then you need to explain your understanding of how things got the way they did. Then you need to share exactly what you think they need to do to resolve it. And of course, engaging them in this conversation is critical.

They don't want to have to read through hundreds of pages of books and e-books. They don't want to have to listen to hours of downloadable audios. They don't want to sit through a weekend seminar. They want someone to give them insight into their own situations. They want you to hold their hand. They want personalized, customized advice.

Always remember this: People don't want information. They want guidance.

And the reality is that unless your basic point of view matches theirs, you aren't likely get anywhere.

That's why this all starts by choosing the right niche, the right community to work with. And why it's so much easier if you're already a member of that community. If you already share their values, worldview and beliefs about life then you don't need to 'try' to connect with them. You inherently will.

Again: People don't want information. They want guidance.

But your guidance will be based on a certain point of view, perspective, set of assumptions and premises, opinions, frames and beliefs.

And your guidance will be far more trusted when people understand where you're coming from.

But here's the question - do you even really know what your point of view on your business and industry is? Could you articulate it clearly and powerfully?

*"Because these businesses saw that people wanted clarity and a sense of control – they held it as their job to give their clients perspectives and a point of view that they could trust. The client needed to be able to hang their hat on everything they said."*

**Jay Abraham**

To help you out here's some questions from the book [Beyond Buzz](#) by Lois Kelly:

## What We Believe Questions: An Expanded List

1. We believe that...
2. Our take on the situation is that...
3. The narrow slice of the issue that more people should understand is...
4. The one thing that matters the most in this issue/trend is...
5. People are wasting too much time talking about...
6. The thing that should worry people is...
7. Conventional thinking says \_\_\_\_\_, but we think it's really \_\_\_\_\_
8. The area where too much money and time is wasted in this industry is...
9. Overcoming this one obstacle would change the game...
10. To make a big difference in this area we should focus on just this one thing...
11. We never want to be associated with...
12. Our product/industry/company matters more/less today because...
13. To make customers believers they need to understand this one thing...
14. If you had a crystal ball, what changes would you predict for our industry over the next two years?



15. What gets me most excited about our industry/business is...
16. What outrages/frustrates people about common practices in our business/field?
17. What makes people anxious about this issue/trend?
18. If we were to look at our business/organization as a cause, what would it be?
19. What most surprises people about this issue?
20. What makes you angry about perceptions of our business/industry?
21. Why is our industry/service especially relevant at this point in time?
22. The biggest risk in this industry is (...) and no one wants to talk about it because...
23. People would be very surprised if they knew this about our industry/organization...
24. The thing that could dis-intermediate our business/industry is...
25. I'm hopeful that one day our industry will...

Some people, who are very brilliant, simply want to tell people, “*Do this – it’s what you need – trust me.*” And have people move. They don’t want to be burdened by telling the story of how they arrived at that conclusion. If you think that it’s an intellectual battle of “you vs. your clients” it’s all over.

You can’t just shove the facts down their throats.

You need to walk them, step by logical step, empathically and Socratically down the path – reassuring them along the way.

Here are two facts:

1. People need to agree with any claim you make or you’ve lost them.
2. Most people can’t agree with most claims until they’ve had some time to think it through.

Isn’t that true in your experience?

If you try to simply say to a client “this is the way it is” – they won’t be half as likely to believe and own it as if you were to give them the following eight things:

- |                              |                                    |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. The basis for it          | 5. How it would work in their life |
| 2. The implications of it    | 6. How it’s worked in your life    |
| 3. Examples of why it’s true | 7. The cost of not doing it        |
| 4. The alternative           | 8. A story they can relate to      |

#### Four Levels of Advising:

1. **Informational:** this is the lowest level of advising. At this level you basically dole out facts and figures. You don't insert your opinion anywhere, you simply say, “here's the information, decide for yourself”.
2. **Advice:** another approach is to give advice. This is not to be mistaken for being a true advisor. At this level, the adviser, simply says, "I think you should do\_\_\_\_\_” but does not give any rationale or reason as to why they think that is the best approach.
3. **Guidance:** at this level, the advisor says not only what they think that their clients to do but also gives a small amount of background reasoning as to why.
4. **Pre-eminent Guidance:** there are several things to distinguish Preeminent Guidance, from simply giving information advice or a basic level of direction. First of all there is a deep recognition that the client is ultimately going somewhere. There is an understanding that the client has somewhere that they would like to be. And, even more, the adviser has a vision for the client ~ in a nutshell that vision can be summed up as "problem- free".

They hold a vision of the client with all of the problems they are currently facing resolved. They hold a vision of the client as happy, healthy, stress free and deeply fulfilled with their life.

They see their role as one of deeply understanding the current situation of the client and then ethically, a trusted advisor and empathically guiding their client step by step towards that vision.

At this level of guidance did not merely dole out information or advice, but they say, "I think you should do this, for the following reasons and here's all of the facts, and proof of what I'm saying. But, it's ultimately your choice."

As a preeminent advisor, your role is to help them understand 4 things (and to "connect the dots" between them):

1. Where they are - what assets exist within them and around them?
2. Where they're going - what do they want and why do they want it?
3. The full of range of options on how to get there.
4. Your best a trusted advisor opinion on which option they should take and why and what the steps are.

Don't skip to the third step too soon. And don't just give them the advice out of the desire to feel brilliant or significant. Rather help guide them to a feeling of clarity about the first three. Most people are totally disempowered to act because they only have the vaguest sense of where they are and where they're going.

*"It is more important to tell the simple, blunt truth than it is to say things that sound good. Life is not a contest of elegance . . . As a warrior, the leader acts with power and decision. That is the Yang or masculine aspect of leadership. Most of the time, however, the leader acts as a healer and is in an open, receptive, and nourishing state. That is the feminine or Yin aspect of leadership. There is a third aspect of leadership: Tao. Periodically, the leader withdraws from the group and returns to silence, returns to God."*

**Tao Te Ching**