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Sales is Not a Dirty Word

“Daddy, I Want to be a Salesperson”

The odds are pretty good that you never said this as a kid. Most kids want to grow up to be policemen, firemen, professional athletes, singers, actors, lawyers, and doctors. Not too many kids grow up dreaming of being a superstar salesperson. I have never witnessed children playing car dealership. When you were a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? How did that turn out for you? Many college graduates don't even wind up in the field that their degree is in. The good news is that the profession of sales can wind up being a lot better than your childhood dreams.

Most people back into sales as a career rather than choose it. Although that's not ideal, it's certainly okay, as that's the way that I and many others became salespeople. I call people like myself who have found themselves in sales careers *reluctant salespeople*. When you started your job, you probably weren't calling all of your friends and jumping up and down shouting that you had just gotten a position in sales.

Even though you picked up this book and maybe even bought it, there is a good possibility that you may not be that excited about sales at this moment. Not very many people are. Every year, polls and studies list sales as one of the least desired career paths. Very few colleges or technical schools have courses for selling. Most businesses don't offer formalized ongoing education for their salespeople.

The common frame of mind that salespeople share is that they are supposed to be naturally talented or self taught. Salespeople are continually hired and fired based upon the results they produce, and little to no effort is made to improve them. The motto, "Hire in masses and fire their asses" is still the prevalent, though ignorant mentality today. Salespeople are hired everyday without any type of screening, testing, or cogent analysis of their capabilities or talent for sales.

Here is the reality: Selling can, and *should*, be one of the noblest professions you can choose. Yes, that's right; I used the word noble. Among the definitions of noble in Wikipedia is the following: "Having honorable qualities; having moral eminence and freedom from anything petty, mean or dubious in conduct and character." Shouldn't that be part of the definition of salesperson? Shouldn't that be the norm, rather than the exception? Why wouldn't anyone aspire to be that person, and to have that description as part of their career? For all the titles I have—author, speaker, trainer, consultant, and entrepreneur—I am first and foremost a salesperson, and I always will be. I am proud of this title, and you should be as well.

Nothing Happens Unless Someone Sells Something

The world as you know it exists because of sales. If someone, somewhere, somehow is not selling every single day, you wouldn't have food to eat, a car to drive, or a house to live in. We can live a day without the skills of a lawyer, or even a doctor but you can't live even one single day without the skills of a salesperson.

Selling is one of the most important functions in our society. Capitalism and the advancement of any society are dependent upon sales. Everyone

is a salesperson, and everyone sells everyday. In case you don't believe me, consider the following: If you are a parent, you sell "finishing dinner" to kids through the reward of dessert. If you are in a relationship, you sell your girlfriend on watching football in return for a nice dinner out. If you are in a career or have a job, you sell your boss on the effectiveness and productivity of what you do. If you don't have a job, you sell the person you interview with for a job that you are the best choice out of all the other applicants. Everyone is selling something everyday.

As a matter of fact, if you want to see fantastic sales skills in action, just watch kids. They are the best salespeople on earth. Kids understand the importance of selling the moment they arrive on the scene. They sell their tails off, and keep selling. If you watch kids, you'll notice that they ask directly for what they desire. They have not yet been programmed to think that this is somehow wrong or selfish. Kids rarely take no as a final answer, and they think about how to construct alternative persuasive arguments when their initial requests are refused. They try to create leverage in their urging through win-win questions and arguments. They believe strongly in what they want and believe that they deserve it. Usually it's parents, teachers, and other adults who try very hard to express to children that they shouldn't be selling. You were probably reprimanded, scolded, and scoffed at for most of your early selling efforts. Eventually you got the message loud and clear that selling was bad and something to be ashamed of. Managers and owners of businesses wonder why most people stink at selling; it's because they have been conditioned *not* to sell.

The first step in the journey to becoming a sales superstar will be to eliminate this conditioning. Whether you are someone who is considering sales for a career, a struggling salesperson, a salesperson looking to reach another level of success, or a sales superstar who wants to see if I am "spilling the beans" to your secrets, reading this book and utilizing what you learn will change your life.

I bet you have heard everyone of these phrases many times over: "I hate salespeople." "Salespeople are greedy." "Salespeople are pushy." "Salespeople just want your money." "Salespeople are all liars." "Salespeople are just uneducated pond scum that could not get jobs doing anything else." In the same vein, consider the following movies and plays that you may have

seen or read: “Death of a Salesman,” “Boiler Room,” “Tin Men,” “Cadillac Man,” “Wall Street,” “Glengarry Glenn Ross,” and “Other People’s Money.” What images and emotions do you conjure up about salespeople and selling in general? They’re not very positive, are they?

I would like for you to try to name one play, movie, TV show, or book where a salesperson is portrayed as a good person, or someone to be admired. I bet you can’t do it. The first part of becoming a superstar salesperson is to understand the negative conditioning you and the rest of the world have been subjected to about sales. When too much garbage bombards your mind, your mind becomes garbage. You must drain your brain of the negative information that you have been sold and the lies that you have been told in regards to selling. And isn’t there a bit of irony in the fact that you and the rest of the world may have a bad image of selling because of what you have been *sold*, and more importantly—what you have *bought*?

Many sales careers are stalled or derailed because salespeople never identify and get rid of the negative clutter in their brain about sales. If you are trying to be a successful salesperson, but your imagery, emotions, and teachings are in conflict with your mission; you will either fail or become a mediocre, frustrated, and unhappy salesperson. In other words, you will have joined the ranks of 90 percent of salespeople. I have seen a myriad of business cards with creative titles that try to eliminate identifying the person they represent as a salesperson—marketing director, customer representative, customer relations counselor, and new accounts manager. If you can’t admit to being a salesperson or be proud to be a salesperson, you can’t be a successful one. If you are a salesperson, try putting the title “Proud to Be a Salesperson” on your business cards. Let people know you are pleased with your title, and not ashamed. You will stand out in the crowd by doing so. Similarly, I have had numerous salespeople—through telemarketing or face-to-face selling—start off by telling me that they are not trying to sell me something. That’s a part of their pitch. They are liars, however, because they are, and *should*, be trying to sell me something. Let me give you a tip: It’s okay to sell something, and it’s okay to declare it.

I can count on my fingers and toes the so-called sales gurus and trainers who wanted my company to sell their sales seminars because they didn’t feel comfortable selling themselves, and they would rather have someone else do the selling. The truth is that they didn’t believe they could

do what they were teaching. You must embrace selling as something you should do, want to do, and can do and not run from it. You must be able to embrace whatever it is that you are selling. A business professor from Carnegie Mellon once told me that the sales course he taught through an entrepreneur program was the one course he was sure every attendee would eventually use. Therefore, he thought it was the most important. Ask any successful business owner the key to their success, and if they don't tell you that it's the ability to sell, then they just haven't realized it yet.

In his best-selling book, *Rich Dad Poor Dad* (TechPress, 1997), author Robert Kiyosaki recounts how after his college graduation, his so-called "Rich Dad" and mentor had counseled him to take a job in sales with a company that offered a good sales training program. His advice was that sales would be the most important tool that Mr. Kiyosaki would use being an entrepreneur. Meanwhile, Mr. Kiyosaki's own father—the so-called "Poor Dad" who was a college professor and administrator—was shocked at the idea, and thought that this was beneath his son. The Rich Dad had a less formal education than the Poor Dad, but he had experienced far superior results in the business and financial world. Much like myself and many other salespeople, Mr. Kiyosaki backed into sales. His initial thoughts and feelings were that sales might be beneath him or a waste of his college education.

I have witnessed situations like Mr. Kiyosaki's time and time again. Years ago, as a general manager at an automobile dealership, I had a salesperson with tons of talent and potential quit his sales job with our company. The reason he quit his sales job was to take an entry level position with a rental car company. He informed me that he wanted to use his college education. Although I am sure that the company he went to work for is a fine company that provided him with many opportunities, I was positive that this young salesperson was simply embarrassed to be a salesperson, and believed that it was beneath him. The prospect of being a rental clerk was more exciting to him than being a salesperson. The truth is that he probably learned more about the business world and used more of his education in six months of selling cars than he might ever use in the rental car business.

I see more people in sales than in any other profession who are only in selling "until something else comes along." Sometimes I believe there are more admitted career cab drivers in New York and Los Angeles than there are admitted career salespeople. If you get into a sales career "to check it

out, you will check out.” In other words, you will fail due to a lack of commitment. If you want to do more than “check it out,” somewhere, somehow, you must truly commit to sales as a career. You must understand that selling is not a low-level profession. Being a salesperson puts you at the top of the heap, not the bottom.

“Sales” is Not a Dirty Word!

You must be proud of what you do. You must morally, ethically, mentally, and emotionally “buy into” sales as a fantastic career. Selling is not something you can do half-assed or with unenthused commitment. The good news is that there are very few professions that can provide you with as much fun, freedom, excitement, adrenaline, competition, income, and wealth potential as sales. I have spent a lot of time and ink in the beginning of this book discussing the mindset of acceptance and exuberance for selling. The reason for this is because without your total mental and emotional commitment, everything else I share in this book will only lead to mediocrity or failure.

This book is not about how to be good at sales. This book is not about how to be better at sales. This book is about how to be a Sales Superstar. This book is about how to make huge incomes from your sales efforts and get rich. If you don't believe in this premise, do not read the rest of the book. There are tons of sales books that will gain you mediocrity; I only want superstars. Life is too short to aim low and live a daily uninspired existence that is average and frustrating.

Secrets Sales Superstars Don't Want You to Know

Selling is both the highest and lowest paying profession on earth. Unfortunately, the majority of salespeople are in the low end. The good news is that if you do the exact opposite of what 95 percent of salespeople do you will

succeed and can become wealthy in doing so. Let's look at what it means, by definition, to be different in your approach or viewpoint.

Contrary: Opposed, opposite in nature, altogether different.

Contrarian: A person who takes an opposing view, especially one who rejects the majority opinion as in economic matters.

Several Native American tribes such as the Cheyenne, Crow, and Iroquois had warrior sects called Contraries or Contrary Warriors. The Contrary Warriors were different from their peers in their nature, often acting in direct opposition to the conventional tribe wisdom. Despite their controversial actions, they were thought to be very wise warriors, and were said to act like lightning in a storm. The Contraries became one with the sacred power they most feared. They liberated themselves from conventional and hallowed fears. As you look through history, you will likely make the same observation of most successful people. Successful people, like the Contrary Warriors, think for themselves and don't blindly follow the teachings and thoughts of the masses.

I have been in sales for most of my life and have spent a lot of time, money, and effort to study superstar salespeople and entrepreneurs. Because of what I have studied, learned, and taken action on, I have had a lot of success and made quite a bit of money in sales. I have often found that superstar salespeople take a Contrarian approach to sales and their business. Following the masses seldom leads to success in sales, just like following the masses seldom leads to success in any endeavor. When everyone else in the marketplace buys stocks, real estate, or anything else in false exuberance, the Contrarian investor patiently waits to pounce on the opportunities created when the market turns and winds up picking the bones of the dead carcasses from the ignorant masses. When the world was busy buying tech stocks and looking to get rich quick, the "Oracle of Omaha" Warren Buffett refused to follow the trend and buy businesses he did not understand. No matter how much the so-called experts blasted him as being a "has-been" or out of touch, he took the Contrarian Approach. Mr. Buffett stayed invested with companies such as Coca Cola and Dairy Queen, instead of the sexier tech stocks that most people thought would

bring quick riches. Warren Buffet never followed the masses, and through an approach that seemed contrarian to many investors at the time, wound up with substantial profits while the tech stocks sank.

The entrepreneur who follows the masses and opens up the tenth coffee shop in a small town because it seems cool and is what everybody is doing; winds up failing and losing money. Unsuccessful salespeople are like lemmings. Lemmings are the animals that blindly follow one another in a line right off a cliff to their death. On the other hand, the Contrarian entrepreneur looks for the niche opportunity created because of all the new coffee shops, and succeeds because he goes where no one else is going.

Thirty years ago when I began my career, I made note of who was the very best in sales—who the “superstars” were. I observed that they made much more money than the rest of the salespeople, and I noticed that they broke all the so-called rules of selling. The superstars didn’t think or act the same way as the rest of the salespeople. The sales superstars did not wait for customers or even expect the business they worked for to provide them with leads. The sales superstars knew that the REAL money is in their customer base, and did not ignore this. Sales superstars didn’t use the same sales presentations or customer qualifying techniques that everyone else uses. The sales superstars understood their customers, and they used this understanding to bend the rules in the selling system or in the companies they worked for.

Often, sales superstars’ managers can’t stand them. The superstars are often thought of as uncontrollable, and they don’t tow the company line. The superstars are often called “mavericks” or “high maintenance.” Those same managers tell new salespeople not to emulate superstars because “they are different, and everyone can’t do what they do.” The truth is those managers are looking for people they can control. Superstar salespeople tend to threaten weak managers. They are often condemned because they do things differently. But of course doing things differently is what makes them superstars.

When you become a selling superstar, be prepared to deal with the jealousy that you will incur from managers and fellow salespeople. Just remember that no one can keep you from being successful except you. You are in charge of your destiny. Be happy that you have critics, it means you have success to be envied. Critics don’t pick on the weak; they don’t

have anything to gain in doing so. In Australia, this is called the “Tall Poppy Syndrome.” When one poppy grows taller than the other poppies, the others begin to squeeze and smother the tall poppy to keep it from growing taller than the rest. This way, all the poppies stay the same height. That’s exactly what will happen to you if you let it. Don’t be a poppy. Allow yourself to grow despite the squeezing and smothering you may experience.

I am not telling you to be a troublemaker, or to break rules for the sake of breaking rules. I am not telling you to purposely be a thorn in your manager’s side. However, I am telling you that to be successful in anything, you have to make tough decisions and follow a path that may not always be popular, and will most certainly often be Contrarian.

During my time as general manager of the automobile dealership, I held a meeting one day and asked my sales team, “What if we started doing everything differently? What if we did the exact opposite of everything we currently do? What if our meeting and greeting of our customers was opposite of what it is now? What if our customer qualifying process was opposite? What if our presentation process was opposite? What if our negotiation process was opposite? What if our marketing was opposite?”

Several of the salespeople asked me why I was asking this. I told them that I felt that the industry was stale. I believed that we had been selling cars the same way for over fifty years. I told them that I thought our customers were becoming more educated and were changing, and that we and the rest of the business would have to change with them. I said that customers would simply not put up with the nonsense that they had experienced in the past when they shopped for and bought vehicles. I told our sales team that we could either be leading this charge, or we could fall behind. I said that although we were currently number one in sales in our marketplace, that stagnation would eventually lead to trouble for us.

This book, and a lot of what’s in it, comes directly or indirectly from that one question I asked my sales team many years ago: “What if we started doing everything differently?” I began to observe every step of the sales process from the simple meet and greet down to negotiations. I began to use trial and error in seeing if my Contrarian approach would work. Some things worked really well, while others had to be tweaked.

The bottom line is that one simple question led to major changes, which led to big success. Since that time I have applied that same thought process in helping salespeople from all kinds of businesses representing all kind of industries.

The same principle applies to your sales success. Here is the truth—much of what you’ve learned is wrong. Most of what sales trainers are pushing is useless. You may have sat for hours in training sessions writing down everything that you hear because you’re hoping that one of these gurus has the “magic button.” You are looking for the one line that’s going to miraculously overcome objections and help close every sale as easy as one, two, three. The truth is that most of those gurus are peddling old-fashioned information. They’re only teaching twenty-five tips, or ten rules, or a “road map” to sales success. That’s the old school approach. The reality today is that sales success takes more than sales skills. You need proficiency beyond the “Tie-Down Method,” or “Qualifying Your Customer.” You need more than just a networking group meeting and thank-you cards. You must have access to what’s working in today’s market, and you need to use what works in this century. You need the mindset and real world knowledge that are going to make you a superstar. Selling is a job that demands a new and improved tool kit. I’m not talking about tricks or slippery systems to get a customer to cave in. These tools are ones that influence you not the customer. These are the tools that make you better. And when you get better, it’s amazing how much better your customers get.

That’s what this book is about. It’s about throwing out all the old-school rules of sales, or at least being willing to question them. It’s the Contrarian Guide to being a sales superstar. In all fairness, I must give you a disclaimer that not all sales education, techniques, or training are bad; some are quite good, and still usable today. However, many are not. The idea is that everything is up for review. Nothing is sacred just because it’s the way you were taught or the way you have always done it.

This book will teach you what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and most importantly, why to do it. Everything you learn in this book may be explained in a manner that is probably opposite of what you have been taught. As a matter of fact, what I tell you to do may sometimes be the wrong thing to do; but doing the wrong thing is part of success.

Continually testing, tinkering, and improving are all parts of the equation that brings about sales success. To be a sales superstar, you have to be willing to make mistakes more often and fail more often. Your failures are a big part of your sales education. Learn to embrace the bumps in the road, but don't accept them as permanent.

The world of sales is a not a perfect one, and nobody in it has absolute answers. Selling is part science and part art, and it can never be fully mastered. That is exactly why selling is such a fun, exciting, and fulfilling profession. Very few people reach sales superstar status; that is also why it pays so well. Am I trying to scare you by telling you this? If this scares you, then pick another profession. Selling is not for the faint of heart.

The Millionaire Maker—What do you need to be a Sales Superstar?

- **Sales Skills:** You don't need a magic button to overcome objections. You need to understand why people have objections in the first place, and how to eliminate eight out of ten objections before they ever occur. Sales today is about being proactive, not reactive. You must be able to recognize an objection even when your customer is not verbalizing one. Sales skills include abilities such as how to present and demonstrate your product or service, how to take or make sales calls, or how to negotiate professionally.

When most people think of a salesperson, they picture a slick, fast talking individual with all of the answers who manipulates someone into buying something, whether they want it or not. Although sales superstars are excellent persuaders, they are equally as good at helping people find the solutions to their problems. The best superstar salespeople I have ever seen were great not just because of their sales skills, but because of the other skills listed below. Instead of learning fifty ways to close a sale, why not try writing down the four most frequent objections you get, and why they come up. With a little thought and preparation, you just might be able to head off many of the objections. Think like a Contrarian. Reverse the mindset.

Here's a Shocker. . .

Improving your sales skills will help you tremendously, but this alone will not make you a sales superstar. That's what most salespeople and sales training focus on; but it totally misses the mark. You must become great at the following skills to become a sales superstar; the ability to master these skills is the mark of a true Millionaire Maker.

- **People Skills:** Whenever I interview potential salespeople and they say, "I love people," it frankly makes me want to puke. Yes, you must want to help your customers solve their problems, you must TLC—Think Like a Customer, and you must really care for your customers. However, sales superstars rarely become superstars because of their love of humanity. Mother Theresa was a great salesperson for humanity, but she probably would not have done well selling computers.

Although salespeople do not have to be great humanitarians, they must practice good human relations skills, such as listening. When your customer speaks, you must know what they are saying, what they are trying to say, and what they really mean. Old-school techniques rely solely on what to say back, which only makes your customers mad. Sales superstars have excellent listening skills. They observe people, are highly intuitive, and have the capacity to read and truly understand people.

- **Life Skills:** These are the everyday skills that separate you from the masses. You must be precise with what you think, what you do, when you do it, and why you are doing it. You must understand abundance versus scarcity. The world is an abundant universe with unlimited resources. Money is not limited, sales are not limited, and customers are not limited. Proper life skills will allow you to tap into this abundance at any time.

How to gain and maintain a sales superstar attitude is part of honing these life skills. Figuring out what to do with your day that leads to the

most bang for your buck is a life skill. Knowing how to trigger strong sales persistence when your competition has already quit is a life skill. These skills are not rah-rah sales tips or how to do your to-do list. These are real, live, actionable ideas. For example, in the Action Management section of this book, you will learn that what you have been taught by time management gurus can make you a slave and keep you broke. In the Goal Setting section, you will learn why 95 percent of salespeople fail or don't reach their potential because of life skills alone.

Superstar salespeople figure out early on that you must work as hard, or even harder, on yourself as you do on your business. Successful people are eager learners. They understand that you never stop learning, and that you are never too successful to learn. Education must become a regular part of your day. If you are a sales manager and you interview sales recruits, ask them how they feel about continuing education. Ask them what they have done to educate themselves lately. If you are faced with a person who can't demonstrate a desire for learning, then don't hire them. These people turn out to be prima donna low producers.

- **Marketing Skills:** Lots of people tell you how to market yourself. Every day I read more about the power of marketing, or branding, or some other new idea that keeps salespeople broke. Showing up at cocktail parties or business networking breakfasts and handing out your business card is no way to market yourself. Chances are, the salesperson at these events has too much time on their hands, and the sales superstars are not there, because they are out making sales. If the sales superstars are at these events, they have a better game plan than handing out boring business cards that fail to market them and that lack incentives for someone to take action.

This book will show you low- to no-cost marketing techniques to make you money. To thrive in sales, you must become a student and practitioner of emotional direct response marketing. You have to have a constant flow of leads that you create. For over one hundred years, traditional sales training has tried to teach you what to do to become great with customers. However, you first have to be great at *getting* customers, so that you

have customers to be great *with*. Without customers, you fail. You have to acquire customers, and just as importantly—you have to keep them. Most salespeople worry so much about getting new customers that they forget to do what is necessary to keep the ones they already have.

I will cover all of these skills in detail in the following chapters. Why listen to me? Because I've been there. I've lived it, and I still do. I have been a successful salesperson from a young age. I know what it's like to be broke and need to sell something just to eat and pay rent. I know the challenges you face. I have gone from being broke and homeless to being wealthy and successful because of sales. I am not a sales professor or some has-been sales hack that talks about success, but has never experienced it. I have sold many millions of dollars of products and services and have risen from the bottom to the top. So have countless others using my methods and ideas. I have created several successful businesses using the exact methodology that I will share in this book.

Salespeople are not born; they are made. I don't believe in the natural born salesperson. I have had people tell me that Michael Jordan was a natural born basketball player. Michael Jordan may have been born with immense talent and gifts, but he was cut from his high school basketball team. Even he had to practice and work his rear off to become great. Don't use excuses and allow thoughts of mediocrity to keep you from superstar status.

Sales superstars learn early on that they have to work as hard *on* the business as they do *in* the business. Every day, your thoughts and actions must be directed toward growing your business exponentially, and how to automate a large percentage of your everyday functions. You can learn to automate many parts of your marketing, customer follow-up, and other functions. You can learn to grow your business by expanding your efforts through others and outsourcing. The average salesperson will often complain that they don't have enough time. He does not believe that he can find alternate resources for anything he desires to do or have done. The average salesperson waits for things to happen and hopes and prays for success. I use the anagram "HOPE" to describe this person's actions, which can be defined as **H**aving **O**ptimistic **P**redictions and **E**motions. Although having hope is the first step, there is a saying, "Pray, but move your feet." Hope can only get you so far.

I have seen superstar salespeople who were not considered attractive—I definitely fall into that category. I have seen superstar salespeople that were not smooth talkers. I have seen superstar salespeople that had foreign dialects and were very hard to understand, who were not well-educated, and who were not necessarily nice people. There is not a cookie cutter formula for superstar salespeople. Superstars come in all shapes, sizes, and personalities.

So eliminate any excuses, get rid of any preconceived ideas, eradicate the mental baggage; and let's begin your journey to becoming a sales superstar.

