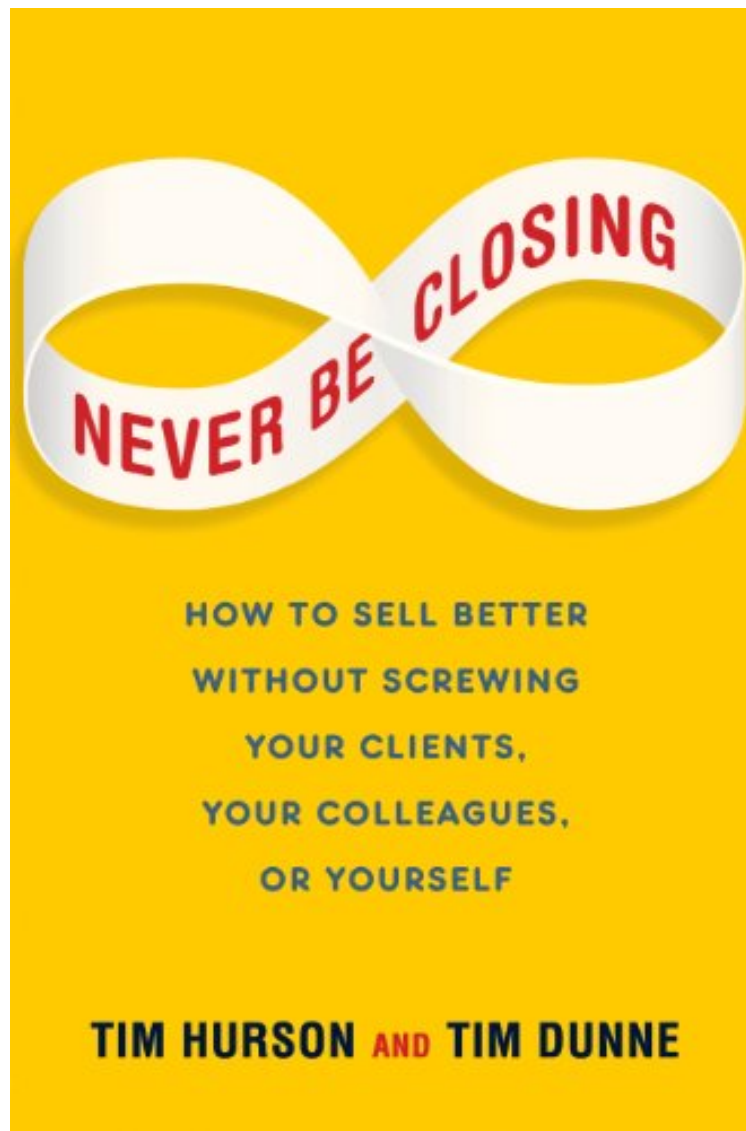


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Never Be Closing: How to Sell Better Without Screwing Your Clients, Your Colleagues, or Yourself

Tim Hurson, Tim Dunne

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Tim Hurson, Tim Dunne : Never Be Closing: How to Sell Better Without Screwing Your Clients, Your Colleagues, or Yourself before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Never Be Closing: How to Sell Better Without Screwing Your Clients, Your Colleagues, or Yourself:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A great read...even if you are not in salesBy Chip HaussEven though I am not in sales, I bought this book, because I had liked Thinking Better so much that I cited it in the first pages of the

book on peacebuilding I am currently writing. Frankly, I wasn't expecting to be bowled over by this book. But I was. Although this is a book about sales, it really is about the way we could strengthen any relationship in which a reader's job involves trying to convince someone else of something else. In that sense, I do sell things--mostly peace and the college Hurson and I both attended. I do not know much about the dozens of other books on sales now keeps recommending to me. After reading *Never Be Closing*, I'm not sure I need to read any of the rest of them. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Very much enjoyed Tim's first book on better thinking methodology and processes. By Richard Wooden. Remembering to take time to THINK with a bit more discipline and concern for the person at the other end is a point to remember and succeed in today's customer-first world. Very much enjoyed Tim's first book on better thinking methodology and processes: Creative versus Critical thinking. This book suggests key thoughts for better actions: Become less of a stranger to your clients. plan exceptional first meetings with a before action plan, after that conversation/meeting have an after action review, look for unexpected connections, and so forth. Make sure to also read the appendix on review of productive selling. Give a copy to fellow entrepreneurs and those that enjoy thinking with productive selling actions. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Staying useful is now our most important mission with our clients. By yoell. I have read (and am still reading) *Never Be Closing*; dancing with the content. Sometimes I flow, sometimes I skip, sometimes I go fast, sometimes I go slow, sometimes I go forwards, sometimes I have to go back. I am taking my time, and enjoying it very much. The principles of the book have been very timely for us. Our economic landscape has changed forcing us to sell differently. We are not yet using all the tools, but we are using the principles; for example: staying useful is now our most important mission with our clients. And that single element is changing the way we do business.

Speaker and consultant Tim Hurson presents 12 techniques that benefit both the seller and the client. *Never Be Closing* expands on the principles of Tim Hurson's first book, *Think Better*, to teach salespeople how to improve their strategy and sell anything to anyone using a simple, repeatable framework. This isn't a book full of mundane tactics for cold-calling or techniques for closing a deal. This is a problem-solving approach that is more beneficial for both the seller and the client. Selling better isn't just a one time thing; it's a way to become a more valuable long-term partner. With their "Productive Selling Model," Hurson and Dunne offer business people a set of 15 tools to pull apart their current techniques, analyze them, and re-assemble them in a dynamic way. The authors include practical advice mixed with helpful anecdotes to build mutually productive relationships between seller and client, including: * The Rashomon Effect, which teaches readers how to bridge the gap between different perspectives. * The Hitchcock Method, which offers readers strategies on developing a script about themselves, their company, and their products. * The Sales Conversation, a three step structure to explore the client's needs, establish credibility, and deliver value. Tim Hurson is the founding partner of Manifest Communications, one of North America's leading social marketing agencies. He launched ThinkX Intellectual Capital in 2004 and is the author of *Think Better: An Innovator's Guide to Productive Thinking*. Tim Dunne is a consulting partner with ThinkX, KnowInnovation, and New Improved, firms that offer leadership, innovation, and sales training to companies worldwide.

"Self-Help Advice That Works: We sifted through recent life-improvement books and found the can-do strategies to help you become more successful, more focused and more connected. Hurson and Dunne's *Never Be Closing* is about how to create more intimate and successful business relationships. [But] their advice could work for many of us in areas beyond work." --Oprah.com "Hurson and Dunne have produced an intelligent, easy-to-understand guide from which professional and novice sales folks alike will gain a great deal of comfort." --Booklist "Easy-to-apply principles and tools help deliver real value to prospects and increase the odds for sales success." Hurson and Dunne do an admirable job of equipping sales professionals with effective strategies. They show how to capitalize on every step from the waiting room to small talk, maximizing opportunities to learn about a potential client and their needs. --Publishers Weekly "Never Be Closing is filled with creative strategies and invaluable tools to help you drive more sales. If you're serious about being successful, it's a must read." --Jill Konrath, author of *Agile Selling* and *SNAP Selling* "The Productive Thinking process in *Never Be Closing* is applicable far beyond traditional sales. Hurson and Dunne present a structure and then provide invaluable techniques to help you use problem solving no matter what sales situation you encounter." --Mark Savan, president, Fortune Brands Windows Doors "F. W. Woolworth said, 'I'm the world's worst salesman, so I have to make it easy for people to buy.' He'd have loved this book. It's all about the sweet spot where people, process, and purpose come together to make sales that are a success for everyone." --Wally Bock, leadership coach and author of the blog *Three Star Leadership* "You won't read this book swinging in a hammock; you'll read it sitting at your desk with pen and paper in hand. This book is a resource that will help you work through and chart a clear path to success, not just dream about it. If you are seriously intent on helping your clients see bigger and better possibilities, this book will help you get there." --Ian Percy, organizational psychologist and possibility expert and author of *Going Deep* "Never Be Closing breaks new frontiers. It will appeal to both the beginner salesperson and the seasoned

pro. Each chapter contains take-away nuggets to use over and over in multiple sales situations. Don't wait! Turn the advice into action before your competitors do.

—Preston Diamond, managing director, Institute of WorkComp Professionals

“Buy this book. Read this book. Use this book.”

—Tom Stoyan, Canada's sales coach

About the Author

Tim Hurson is the founding partner of Manifest Communications, one of North America's leading social marketing agencies. He launched ThinkX Intellectual Capital in 2004 and is the author of *Think Better: An Innovator's Guide to Productive Thinking*. Tim Dunne is a consulting partner with ThinkX, KnowInnovation, and New Improved, firms that offer leadership, innovation, and sales training to companies worldwide.

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PART I Guiding Principles

CHAPTER 1A Stranger Comes to Town

—Why We Sell

All literature is one of two stories: a man goes on a journey or a stranger comes to town.

—Leo Tolstoy

Imagine how life must have been for early humans. They lived in close family groups, probably quite small in size. Because everyone knew everyone else, people wouldn't have much need for selling skills. Within a community, property was likely shared. Exchanging use of this or that item was easy and clear. You knew your neighbor's character, skills, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, and needs—which were pretty much the same as yours. Nobody really had to “sell” anything to anyone else. But then something new happened. One day, a stranger came to town. Your family's first reaction might have been to drive him off, maybe even kill him. After all, who knew what ills an outsider might bring? But the stranger had something you had never seen before, something to trade—perhaps a tool, a trinket, a particularly well-crafted hunting stick. Suddenly the dynamic changed. You realized there might, after all, be a reason to welcome the stranger, albeit warily. It's not unlikely that that's how the first sales scenario unfolded. Of course, the stranger would have had to convince you of several things: First, that his hunting sticks would be good for you in some way, that they would do what he indicated they would do, that he could be relied on to tell the truth. Ideally, he would demonstrate that he and his “products” were useful. Second, that his offer was worth whatever he wanted in return. If the stranger wanted that hand ax you had worked so hard to make, he would have had to propose a trade you would see as advantageous. If your brother or your neighbor needed to persuade you of something, he would rely on his reputation. But the stranger doesn't have the advantage of reputation or status. He would have to find a way to sell you on his proposition. Not much has changed since our imagined stranger came to town and offered to trade his hunting sticks for your hand ax.

—If you sell, and if you aim to sell better, you need to know about the stranger's dilemma. A stranger doesn't have the leverage of instant credibility. So it's not surprising that a wide range of sales tactics, tools, and closing techniques have been developed as a substitute for credibility. Their purpose is often to wrangle out a commitment to buy, even when buying may not be in the best interests of the client. The Productive Selling approach we advocate in this book and the courses we teach are designed to overcome the stranger's dilemma, but in a very different way. Productive Selling isn't just a catalog of techniques to wrestle money out of a client's pocket. It's a comprehensive strategy that starts with a well-researched process for identifying and solving problems. In our story of prehistoric sticks and stones, the fundamental reason you and the stranger were able to make an exchange was that each of you solved a problem for the other—you saw value in the stranger's hunting sticks, and he saw value in your hand ax. At its essence, Productive Selling is about helping people solve problems. It focuses the power of a deliberate problem-solving process to help people. It shows you how to access your creativity to establish and maintain relationships that will be truly useful for both you and your clients over time. In a very real sense, this book will show you how to become less of a stranger to your clients. So you can sell better.

—Before we start, it's important to make note of the other side of Tolstoy's observation—the second basic story in literature is that a person goes on a journey. Tolstoy could have simplified his analysis even more: “a stranger comes to town” and “a person goes on a journey” are really the same story—just told from different points of view. If every client sees the salesperson as the stranger who may or may not be worthy of trust, then every person who sells is that same stranger on a journey—having to prove himself to new people, in new places, with new challenges. So welcome, stranger. This book is about—and for—you. It's our privilege to take you on a rewarding journey, one that we hope will open your eyes to a new and better way of selling, and that will benefit both you and those you encounter along the way.

CHAPTER 2 Think About It

—Think Better to Sell Better

Creative thinking may simply mean the realization that there's no particular virtue in doing things the way they have always been done.

—Rudolph Flesch

Some years ago, we ran an innovation program for the executive team of a large printing firm. The next week, we debriefed with the CEO, a man named Bert. He'd been a semipro fullback before getting into business, and his leadership style was still to run straight up the middle. Bert said, “That was the best sales training I've ever seen. My sales guys need that.” Bert's communication style was so direct that it was sometimes hard to tell if he was being serious. “You want your salespeople to take our innovation program?” “Nah, they wouldn't sit still for it. But it's the way you guys think. The problem-solving part. They could use that. It's good. Put something together. Short.”

The conversation clicked over to Bert's need to plan for his board meeting. In five minutes the meeting was over. That was Bert. Later, in our own debrief, we started thinking about Bert's reaction to our program. We'd been offering Productive Thinking and creative problem-solving services to

organizations large and small, at home and abroad, for much of our working lives. We'd applied the process successfully to innovation projects, strategic initiatives, new product development, marketing, conflict resolution, and even political campaigns. Productive Thinking was so much a part of us that we naturally applied it to our own sales efforts, but it never occurred to us to tailor it specifically to the sales process and offer it to our customers. Bert had seen the relationship in an instant. And he was right. Fundamentally, the best salespeople help clients solve problems. That's what Productive Thinking is all about. The only difference is the type of problem the client is facing. In Productive Thinking we focus primarily on helping clients with marketing innovations, new product development, process improvements, and so on. Outstanding salespeople solve their own unique set of problems, from cost constraints to supply chain inefficiencies to tight delivery deadlines. But the basic situation is the same: if salespeople can help their clients better understand the challenges they face and offer useful, creative ideas to address those challenges, they are doing their job. Thanks, Bert. This book, and the work it's based on, is a result of that simple insight. We know that by using Productive Thinking tools to think about yourself, your client, and the way you interact with each other, you'll be able to sell more—and more effectively—than ever before. In this book you won't find information about cold calling or qualifying or closing new clients. You won't find the top ten techniques to overcome client objections. And you won't catch us lecturing you about how your main job is to get your clients to make a buying decision. What you will find is a set of easy-to-apply principles and tools designed to help you discover and deliver real value to prospective clients—and transform them into ongoing, productive relationships. Our premise is that selling is not about the art of persuasion. Instead, the best kind of selling emerges naturally from your genuine interest in the person you're working with and your sincere desire to be of use. Does that sound naïve? Cast your mind back to the last time you felt you were being sold—the last time someone employed disingenuous flattery or transparent repetition or obvious closing techniques, like the drop close, the reflex question close, the inverted tie-down, or the ever popular porcupine.* Did you know the salesperson was trying to manipulate you? How did it make you feel? Even if you eventually agreed to buy, what are the odds you'll want to do business with that person again? Productive Selling takes a different approach. It focuses on the long-term relationship you can build with your client and the practical basis for that relationship—your genuine desire to offer value. You'll notice us talking about delivering value and being useful a lot in this book. We think it's a great principle to live and work by. In fact, Never Be Closing may be the first sales book you'll actually want your clients to read. Since Productive Selling is based on our Productive Thinking model, let's start at the beginning—with a brief description of what Productive Thinking is all about, and how practicing its key principles can help you sell better. As we described in our first book, Think Better, Productive Thinking is a structured way of approaching problems and opportunities. Using the Productive Thinking framework, innovators do three essential things: Get a clear and accurate understanding of the issues that need to be resolved. Define the specific questions that need to be answered in order to resolve those issues. Find creative and useful solutions, and refine them so they can be acted on. In Productive Thinking we break these activities down further into six process steps: What's Going On? Rigorously explore the current situation, identify the specific discomforts that need to be resolved, and establish a vision for the future. By doing this, you create a useful context for your further thinking. What's Success? Define clear and measurable criteria for success in order to measure the potential effectiveness of proposed solutions. This creates what we call Future Pull—a vision of a future so compelling that it drives you forward, even through the inevitably difficult work to follow. What's the Question? Articulate specific questions that need to be answered to resolve the discomfort. Once you find these questions they become catalysts to new ways of seeing your issue and new approaches for addressing it. Generate Answers. Suggest creative ideas for answering those questions. The result of this brainstorming will be several solution alternatives. These are not yet full-fledged solutions, but possible approaches to explore. Forge the Solution. Refine the most promising answers into robust solutions. This step selects the most promising ideas and forges them into robust, actionable solutions. Align Resources. Identify and recruit the resources required to create and execute a plan of action. In diagrammatic form, the Productive Thinking framework looks like this: Each step has a set of tools to help people work through the process efficiently, effectively, and creatively. Productive Thinking is also built on a set of underlying principles—ways of thinking that pervade the creative problem-solving process. They're what Bert was talking about when he said, "It's the way you guys think."¹ Be Aware of Patterned Thinking The first principle is the recognition that, as creative as we'd all like to think we are, we are impeded by a set of natural barriers that all of us share. We tend to think in patterns. Once we've learned a particular way of doing or seeing something, we tend to keep doing and seeing things that way—often in the face of overwhelming evidence that it might be useful to change. You might recognize these sorts of patterns in yourself—that you sit in the same seat at your breakfast table each day, that you take the same route to work each day, that you use the same words and expressions over and over. You're not alone. We all do it. This patterned thinking doesn't cause us too many problems when it comes to putting away the dishes or brushing our teeth, but sometimes following our patterns without thinking can get us into trouble. It can blind us to new perspectives and insights. It can cause us to default to "same old, same old" answers when new answers might be more useful. The Elephant's

TetherThe first barrier of patterned thinking is something we call the elephant's tether. Traditional elephant handlers in India prevent elephant calves from wandering by chaining one of the animal's legs to a stake deeply embedded in the ground. The young elephants aren't strong enough to break the chain or dislodge the stake. When they pull against it, the chain tightens and causes them discomfort. Soon enough, they stop trying. As adults, these same elephants can be kept in place with a light rope tied to a stake hammered into the ground with a few strokes. Full-grown elephants can easily break these bonds. But they don't. They become prisoners of a pattern that tells them escape is impossible. For the elephant the pattern of restraint is as powerful as any physical restraint.

Gator BrainThe second barrier is our tendency to defend what we already know and what we already are. We all like to think we think with that big, wrinkly neocortex we see in pictures of the brain, but in reality we do a whole lot of thinking with the more primitive parts of our brains—the limbic system, which produces our emotions, and the stem brain, which reacts instinctively to perceived threats. We call this instinctive part of the brain the Gator Brain. Science tells us that human beings process just about every experience we encounter first through our Gator Brains, then through our emotional brains, and at the very last through our cognitive, rational brains. That's because the neural fibers that connect our sensory inputs to the three parts of our brains are of slightly different lengths. When your senses pick up a stimulus, the signal travels through your neural network first to the Gator, then to the emotional brain, then to the cognitive brain. All this happens in tiny fractions of a second. It's a matter of biology and physics. And the sequence tells us a lot about the way we react to the world around us. If you've ever had to slam on your brakes to avoid an accident, you know what we're talking about. First you react: your foot finds the break pedal and pushes hard. Then your emotional brain kicks in and you start to experience fear, anger, or relief. Finally, your cognitive brain kicks in and you start thinking "Wow, that was close!" or "What an idiot!" That's how we're built. And it's a good thing. Your Gator Brain has probably saved you from hurting yourself countless times. It's probably even saved your life. The problem arises when we try to work strategically on a complex task. It's then that our Gator can often get in the way. Think of the last time you were in a meeting and someone came up with a surprising idea. It's almost guaranteed that even before the person finished saying it, your Gator was reacting. And a not-so-little voice inside you was saying, "That's the stupidest idea I've ever heard." We'll see later in this book how the Gator Brain (either yours or your client's) can ruin a sales meeting. But don't worry, we'll show you how not to become the Gator's breakfast.

2. Separate Your ThinkingThe second core Productive Thinking principle—shared by many other problem-solving approaches—is something we call separate your thinking. Here's what it means. When it comes to solving problems, all of us have two basic modes of thinking. One is what we sometimes call shower thinking—that creative free-for-all style of thinking that many people experience while taking a shower, or driving, or doing repetitive work such as gardening or vacuuming or washing the dishes. It's the kind of thinking that makes all kinds of crazy connections, sometimes resulting in aha! moments. We call this kind of thinking creative thinking. It generates ideas. The other type of thinking is the analytical, rational style of thinking with which we weigh and evaluate our ideas. It's the kind of thinking that measures and compares different ideas to determine which one might be the most suitable in a given situation. We call this critical thinking. It's the judge. Both kinds of thinking are crucial for solving problems. We need the generative, idea-manufacturing functions of creative thinking, and we need the focused, idea-evaluation functions of critical thinking. What we don't need is both at the same time. We've all been in a situation where new ideas are put on the table, and the first thing that comes out is a lot of criticism about why the ideas won't work. Less often there's a lot of positive feedback about how great the idea is (especially if it's the boss's idea). Both of these judgmental responses—the positive and the negative—stop our creative thinking cold. What started out as a brainstorming session ends up being a brain drizzle. Instead of generating lots of possibilities, only the first one or two ever get considered. What we recommend instead is the practice of separating your thinking. First, come up with lots of ideas without discussing them at all. Have that shower thinking reign supreme, generating one idea after another—good, bad, indifferent, it doesn't matter. Then, after a set period of time or a set number of ideas, go back to that wonderful list and use your rational, critical brain to start evaluating them. By the simple act of separating the generation of ideas from the judgment of ideas, you end up with a lot more ideas on the table. And, as you'll read further on, the more ideas you generate, the more likely you'll find some that are useful. Think of it this way. You're a pearl fisher somewhere in the South Pacific. You dive down, pick up an oyster, climb back into your boat, take out your shucking knife, open the oyster, and check it out. Either there's a pearl there or not. You repeat this process for as many times as you can dive that particular day—say, fifty dives. But what if there's a better way? If you had a pile of sacks, you could take one down on your dive and stuff it full of oysters, then surface, toss it into your boat, grab another bag, and dive again. If you did that, you'd have fifty bags full of oysters at the end of your day. Would that increase your chances of finding pearls? Most salespeople get this concept immediately. All things being equal, a salesperson who visits one new client a week is going to make a lot fewer sales than the one who visits seven. It's simple mathematics and probability. Whether it's ideas or sales leads, the more you generate, the better your chance of finding good ones.

3. Reach for the Third ThirdThe third underlying principle is the concept of

the third third. Studies have shown that in great creative ideation sessions, the first third of the session produces ideas that tend to be ordinary, run-of-the-mill concepts that most of the group has probably already encountered before. The second third of the session is where people start stretching a bit, simply because they've run out of those familiar ideas. And the third third is where they begin to generate ideas that are truly innovative and that may hold real promise. In almost all the creative problem-solving sessions we run, it's in that third third that the most promising ideas are usually generated. Unfortunately, most people stop before they ever get to the third third. Often an idea will come up; not particularly new or original or even effective; that kind of addresses the problem, so people stop generating new ideas, satisfied that they've reached their creative limit. But is the first right idea necessarily the best idea? What about the second right idea, the third right idea, the hundredth right idea? Imagine you're hiring for your sales department. Would you flip through a pile of resumes, hire the first person who met your criteria, and then throw the rest of the resumes away? What if there was an all-star hiding in that pile? You'd have thrown away the potential for major success. So the principle of the third third is don't take the first right answer. Wait till you've been able to generate lots of answers and then decide which one might be the most useful. You'll see how the discipline of waiting for the third third is one of the keys to success in the Productive Selling process.

4. Look for Unexpected Connections

About twenty-five hundred years ago, Heraclitus, one of the earliest Greek philosophers, wrote, "The unexpected connection is more powerful than one that is obvious." Each one of the preceding principles is aimed at helping people find unexpected connections, which lie at the very heart of the Productive Thinking process. By breaking away from patterned thinking, by separating creative and critical thinking, and by waiting for the third third, the chances of finding unexpected connections are dramatically multiplied. Seeing old things in new ways is what the aha! moment of creativity is all about. Archimedes, Edison, and Einstein all opened themselves to the power of these unexpected connections to create their discoveries. And the same applies to productive salespeople. By asking questions and listening with an open mind, they are able to see connections between things, people, and ideas that can produce new and insightful ways to benefit their clients. The art of finding and articulating useful unexpected connections is central to Productive Selling.

5. The Power of the Debrief

Finally, Productive Thinking relies on the principle of the debrief. By applying Productive Thinking tools, you can pull apart, analyze, and reassemble any process. Productive Thinking debriefing tools offer you a self-analyzing and self-learning system, through which you can consistently identify and address areas for improvement. Using these tools, Productive Selling can help you figure out where your sales approach is working, where it needs improvement, and how to make it—and you—better. Although we hope to give you some very useful starting points in this book, we also believe that the best place to learn a sales process that works for you is in your own backyard. Productive Selling gives you a way to look at your own experiences, extract useful insights from them (both positive and negative), and then apply those lessons to your work as you move forward. That's the power of the debrief.

Born to Sell?

Perhaps the overriding parallel between thinking and selling is that many people think success in both these activities is primarily a function of natural talent; that good thinkers are simply blessed with good brains, and that good salespeople were just born to sell. There's some truth to both those assertions. Yes, people do have varying levels of creative intelligence, which helps them think more creatively, just as some people have varying levels of social and emotional intelligence, which may help them sell better. But raw talent is only part of the equation. By applying a set of straightforward tools and techniques, by practicing, and by paying attention to feedback, anyone can learn to sell better. In other words, by taking a structured approach to selling, you can leverage whatever natural talent you have and multiply the quality of your output; just as a naturally gifted athlete gets better by learning new skills, practicing them, and adjusting to game situations. And that's as true for the experienced professional as it is for the novice. No matter how good you are now, you can get better; by acquiring new skills, by practicing, and by extracting meaningful lessons from your experiences. Our underlying premise is that to be an outstanding salesperson you have to be useful to your client. One of the most effective ways to be useful is to help solve problems. And the best way to do that is to apply Productive Thinking principles and tools to the selling process. That's why we wrote this book. We want to help you do just that.

CHAPTER 3 Everyone Sells—the Accidental Salesperson

There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly. —R. Buckminster Fuller

We've written this book for people who sell; people who make their livelihoods by introducing others to the products or services they represent, trying to match those offerings to their clients' needs, and eventually striking a deal that benefits everyone. We've written it because we think selling is important. Ever since a stranger "sold" his hunting sticks to your distant ancestors, transactions have been the very essence of social systems. People engage in buying and selling; whether products, services, philosophies, or opinions; dozens of times a day. Look around. Everything; yes, everything; made by human beings is the product of thousands of iterations of someone buying and someone selling something. Although we hope the insights and tools in *Never Be Closing* will be of value to people in sales-related jobs (about one in nine working Americans are employed in sales or sales support roles), this is also a book for the rest of us; those "accidental" salespeople who don't think of themselves as professional sellers: freelancers, consultants, entrepreneurs, and volunteers, whose jobs, community positions, or

personal lives involve selling something to somebody almost every day. The Productive Selling perspectives and tools in the following pages are designed to help anyone who needs to sell, sell better. If you're an entrepreneur looking for investors, you have to compete in a busy marketplace to get their attention. You have to get them to say yes to your request for a meeting. You need to identify what's unique and novel about your idea and your plan, and then you have to decide how to communicate your message. If you're a small business owner, one of your biggest concerns is developing clients, suppliers, and new partners. You need to demonstrate that you can connect them to resources, tools, and people that can make their businesses sing, and that you can develop a mutually supportive web in which everyone prospers. If you're a parent or teacher supporting a new school initiative, you have to get other parents and other teachers to support your proposition. You need to understand what they need, so your proposition has value from their perspective. If you're an outside consultant promoting a new organizational strategy for a client, you have to connect with and build trusting relationships with key stakeholders in order to overcome the resistance to change that plagues us all. If you're an employee in a large organization angling for the raise you deserve, you'll have to plan when and where to talk to your boss for best effect. You'll have to present yourself in terms that connect with her view of the world, in language that makes sense to her. And perhaps you'll need to review your prior failed attempts, to build on what worked and modify what didn't. And of course if you're a professional sales representative for a major supplier trying to close a seven-figure deal, you'll need to show that you know both the risks and the rewards inherent in your client's business, that your offering is right for both their budget and their culture, that you're a valuable resource who can lubricate the path to their objectives, that you do what you say you'll do, and that you'll be around to sort things out if you need to. The principles and tools of Productive Selling will be useful to just about everyone because whether we do so reluctantly, accidentally, or deliberately, we are all salespeople. The Productive Selling process is a structured, practical, repeatable way to help you sell more effectively, and more ethically, than ever before. Productive Selling leverages the principle that the surest way to earn attention is to pay attention. Productive Selling breaks the sales process down into discrete steps—steps that you apply based on knowing why you're doing what you're doing. It's a precision navigation system that recognizes that all sales conversations are ongoing transactions—exchanges of value. Productive Selling starts with the premise that the most important moment in sales is the face-to-face meeting with a potential client. Getting to that critical moment requires careful and efficient planning. Orchestrating that moment requires a specific set of attitudes and skills. And leveraging that moment requires the ability to identify and deliver tangible value to your prospect. In the end, Productive Selling is about being a better strategist, a better coach, a better business partner, a better colleague. Whether you're a seasoned sales pro, a start-up entrepreneur launching the next big idea, a back room staffer trying to make a difference at work, or a parent looking for effective ways to influence your child, if you're ever in a position of needing to sell anything to anyone, the tools, behaviors, and concepts in this book will help you do it better.

CHAPTER 4 Orion's Belt—Setting Your Moral Compass

Do the right thing.—Spike Lee

Since 1976, the Gallup organization has been conducting annual polls about public perceptions of the integrity of people in certain jobs. The findings are remarkably consistent over time. Salespeople don't do too well. One of the reasons for this may have something to do with Orion's Belt. Orion is one of the largest constellations in the night sky. The three stars of Orion's Belt are among the few formations that can be seen from both the Northern and Southern hemispheres. They are so distinct and easy to find that throughout history they have been as important as Polaris in guiding ships and caravans to their destinations. Every life benefits from having a North Star or an Orion's Belt to help guide the way. It's easy to lose oneself in the day-to-day pressures of trying to make a living, trying to get ahead, trying to be noticed. This chapter is about the Orion's Belt of Productive Selling—its three stars: business goals, relationship goals, and intrinsic goals. If you can keep those three stars in balance, you can make the best kinds of sales—those that truly benefit your clients, your organization, and you. But sales is a tricky business, and it can be easy to lose your way. That's why we think Orion's Belt is a better metaphor for us than the North Star. Polaris is fixed. Its relationship to the earth is always the same. Orion, on the other hand, moves. Its position changes with the seasons. Polaris can be seen only from one hemisphere. Orion can be seen from both. In business and sales, things can change fast, sometimes radically. So it's useful to have a set of values that can keep you on track no matter what the circumstances, the season, or your position on the globe. Finding your Orion's Belt isn't always easy. But with perseverance and the powerful Five Whys tool, you can locate its three stars and establish a solid platform from which your work will unfold.—In its 2012 integrity poll, Gallup found that people were most likely to trust nurses, followed closely by pharmacists and medical doctors. At the bottom of the list, the selling professions occupied four of the seven least trustworthy positions. Car salespeople were rated least trustworthy, advertising people were ranked third least trustworthy, stockbrokers fourth least trustworthy, and insurance salespeople seventh least trustworthy. Whenever you try to sell something, there's a good chance that, consciously or not, your client is tagging you with this stereotype. It compounds the stranger's dilemma: not only are you the stranger, but there's little reason for customers to assume your aims and theirs are aligned. You want something. And your customers assume they'll have to pay for it. Ironically, though, the credibility problem many salespeople face isn't confined to their

customers. Their own colleagues and companies may feel equally uneasy about their motives and tactics. "Don't be silly!" you protest. "My job is to bring in contracts, and that's what I do. As long as I keep performing for the company, they'll love me." Really? Do you know what your nonsales colleagues say about you behind your back? Have you ever really analyzed the friction between you and the folks in operations, or in customer service, or in finance?