

A photograph of a meeting table with laptops, a coffee cup, and documents. One laptop screen displays a 'MARKETING STRATEGY' presentation with various charts and icons. The table is wooden, and there are several people's hands visible, suggesting a collaborative work environment.

Why “SALES” is Not a Dirty Five Letter Word

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In an ever increasingly complex world that is ruled by innovation, continuous evolution and disruptive technologies, products and solutions are oftentimes far from simple. Yet one thing remains constant, virtually all buying decisions are made by human beings, people who need to understand and commit to the value of bringing in something new or trying something different, people who need to be sold.

With this rise in complexity, the day of a singular salesperson going in and carrying a sale from beginning to end is quickly passing. More and more, organizations are relying on a team of relationship builders, technical experts and implementation specialists to carry the sales process through to fruition. As such, people who used to be behind the scenes are now being thrust front and center into the arena of sales.

Yet for many of these new entrants into the sales ranks, there exists a stigma, a negative connotation with the concept of sales. It's a dirty word, an activity that seems far outside their comfort zone, something to be avoided at all cost.

For all its derision, ironically, everybody sells something, every day. Look around, every person in your company is selling. People sell their ideas, their opinions and their insights. They are selling other people on listening, they're selling the company on finding better ways to do things or maybe, they're selling their boss on not firing them. Believe me, everyone is selling something.

But why do some people still see sales as a dirty word?

For many, the disconnect comes because they are still holding on to the notion that a salesperson as the fast talking guy in the loud plaid jacket. They think that in order to sell something you have to be slick and a little underhanded. Now, while it is entirely possible to make money in the sales business by lying, deceiving and tricking people in to buying, a person will never truly achieve the greatest rewards of a sales career by deception.

Sales is all about helping people. It is about asking the right questions to understand goals, aspirations and the challenges that stand in the way of accomplishing them. Sales is about partnering, consulting and providing a better understanding of potential solutions to problems and obstacles. The best people in sales are those that become the trusted advisors to their clients.

However, sales is also about something else. Sales is about becoming the best possible version of yourself. *Why is this?* Perhaps the greatest untold truth about sales is that mastering this skillset will teach you nearly everything you need to know in order to succeed in every aspect of your life. Quite simply because succeeding in sales will teach you how to master five mission critical aspects of life: accountability, adaptability, resilience, initiative and courage.

Why are these five things so important in sales and in life?

Accountability as a Success Driver

In sales: Great salespeople leave their excuses at the door. They are all about identifying problems and finding solutions (both for their clients and for themselves). So they simply don't waste time with disabling behaviors like finger pointing, blame and rationalizing why something won't work.

In life: There are certain fundamental truths that stand the test of time. One of these is the fact that *victims never win*. Excuses, rationalization and finger pointing are the foundational cornerstones of a victim mindset. These are the single greatest killers to a life of promise and success. To succeed in life, you have to take accountability at three levels:

- 1st For defining and accomplishing the goals that bring meaning to your life
- 2nd For who you need to become as a person in order to achieve your goals
- 3rd For finding solutions to the challenges you encounter in pursuit of your goals

Adaptability as a Success Driver

In sales: Great salespeople are all about learning. So they are open-minded and willing to listen. They seek out feedback and leverage it to improve every aspect of what they do. They don't spend time bemoaning the fact that something went wrong, they just focus on what they learned from the experience and how they will leverage it to succeed moving forward.

In life: *Win or learn* is the mindset of every peak performer in life. In every endeavor they set out on, highly successful people will either accomplish their goal (win) or they will learn something that will help them to win next time. Failure is only possible if they never try something or they quit trying. Feedback (good or bad/ positive or negative) is one of the most valuable commodities in life – if a person learns, adapts and gets stronger because of it.

Resilience as a Success Driver

In sales: Not every sale is going to close. Sometimes sales that seem imminent go sideways, get delayed or just plain fall through. This is the reality of sales. Regardless of outcome, great salespeople have the ability to maintain a positive, forward-thinking perspective. They understand that every “no” gets them one step closer to a “yes”, so as long as they remain steadfast they will eventually succeed.

In life: Few people are blessed with a hardship free life. Things go wrong, people disappoint us, we make mistakes, get down on ourselves, beat ourselves up or consume our thoughts with negativity which only makes us unhappy. Recognizing that the negative aspects of life only make the positive aspects seem that much sweeter helps us persevere.

Initiative as a Success Driver

In sales: Success in sales is about momentum. More conversations, more meetings, more contacts all mean more sales. Great salespeople have clarity about what they want to achieve and they take the action necessary to accomplish it.

In life: People who wait for success to fall at their feet had better be standing in some comfortable shoes – they will be standing in them for a long time. Success is always driven by the laws of cause and effect. Taking action, creating movement is the cause and achieving success is the effect.

Courage as a Success Driver

In sales: No career path requires a person to be more consistently outside their comfort zones than sales. Whether it be calling and booking sales appointments or closing for the deal, salespeople are constantly facing the unknown and this naturally inspires the emotion of fear. Great sales people learn to rule their fears rather than being ruled by their fears.

In life: Fear is perhaps the biggest disabler of success. It becomes the justification for not taking action. Inaction can only breed mediocrity. Oftentimes our greatest joys, our most proud moments, live on the other side of our fears. Learning to be comfortable with the idea of being uncomfortable is an essential aspect of finding success in life.

Sales will teach you everything you need to know to succeed in life.

For two and a half decades I have had the good fortune to travel around the world and met tens of thousands of people, through this journey I have come to many conclusions. One of them is the fact that everybody wants to be more successful in some aspect or area of their life.

Why have I come to this conclusion? For the simple reason that no one has ever said to me, “My biggest problem is that I am too damn successful.”

Everybody wants more in some aspect of life. The challenge is, they oftentimes just don’t know how to go about getting it. Become a student of sales, learn the lessons it will teach you. Don’t walk away from a career in sales because you are afraid or uncertain, instead run towards learning to sell, it will show you the pathway to building a life that most only dream of, it will teach you all the lessons you need to succeed.

