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DRIVE AND *A WHOLE NEW MIND*

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TO SELL IS
HUMAN  N

THE SURPRISING TRUTH
ABOUT MOVING OTHERS

Introduction

About a year ago, in a moment of procrastination masquerading as an act of reflection, I decided to examine how I spend my time. I opened my laptop, clicked on the carefully synched, color-coded calendar, and attempted to reconstruct what I'd actually done over the previous two weeks. I cataloged the meetings attended, trips made, meals eaten, and conference calls endured. I tried to list everything I'd read and watched as well as all the face-to-face conversations I'd had with family, friends, and colleagues. Then I inspected two weeks of digital entrails—772 sent e-mails, four blog posts, eighty-six tweets, about a dozen text messages.

When I stepped back to assess this welter of information—a pointillist portrait of what I do and therefore, in some sense, who I am—the picture that stared back was a surprise: I am a salesman.

I don't sell minivans in a car dealership or bound from office to office pressing cholesterol drugs on physicians. But leave aside sleep, exercise, and hygiene, and it turns out that I spend a significant portion of my days trying to coax others to part with resources. Sure, sometimes I'm trying to tempt people to purchase books I've written. But most of what I do doesn't directly make a cash register ring. In that two-week period, I worked to convince a magazine

editor to abandon a silly story idea, a prospective business partner to join forces, an organization where I volunteer to shift strategies, even an airline gate agent to switch me from a window seat to an aisle. Indeed, the vast majority of time I'm seeking resources other than money. Can I get strangers to read an article, an old friend to help me solve a problem, or my nine-year-old son to take a shower after baseball practice?

You're probably not much different. Dig beneath the sprouts of your own calendar entries and examine their roots, and I suspect you'll discover something similar. Some of you, no doubt, are selling in the literal sense—convincing existing customers and fresh prospects to buy casualty insurance or consulting services or homemade pies at a farmers' market. But all of you are likely spending more time than you realize selling in a broader sense—pitching colleagues, persuading funders, cajoling kids. Like it or not, we're all in sales now.

And most people, upon hearing this, don't like it much at all.

Sales? *Blech*. To the smart set, sales is an endeavor that requires little intellectual throw weight—a task for slick glad-handers who skate through life on a shoeshine and a smile. To others it's the province of dodgy characters doing slippery things—a realm where trickery and deceit get the speaking parts while honesty and fairness watch mutely from the rafters. Still others view it as the white-collar equivalent of cleaning toilets—necessary perhaps, but unpleasant and even a bit unclean.

I'm convinced we've gotten it wrong.

This is a book about sales. But it is unlike any book about sales you have read (or ignored) before. That's because selling in all its dimensions—whether pushing Buicks on a car lot or pitching ideas in a meeting—has changed more in the last ten years than it did over the previous hundred. Most of what we think we under-

stand about selling is constructed atop a foundation of assumptions that has crumbled.

In Part One of this book, I lay out the arguments for a broad rethinking of sales as we know it. In Chapter 1, I show that the obituaries declaring the death of the salesman in today's digital world are woefully mistaken. In the United States alone, some 1 in 9 workers still earns a living trying to get others to make a purchase. They may have traded sample cases for smartphones and are offering experiences instead of encyclopedias, but they still work in traditional sales.

More startling, though, is what's happened to the other 8 in 9. They're in sales, too. They're not stalking customers in a furniture showroom, but they—make that *we*—are engaged in what I call “non-sales selling.” We're persuading, convincing, and influencing others to give up something they've got in exchange for what we've got. As you'll see in the findings of a first-of-its-kind analysis of people's activities at work, we're devoting upward of 40 percent of our time on the job to moving others. And we consider it critical to our professional success.

Chapter 2 explores how so many of us ended up in the moving business. The keys to understanding this workplace transformation: Entrepreneurship, Elasticity, and Ed-Med. First, Entrepreneurship. The very technologies that were supposed to obliterate salespeople have lowered the barriers to entry for small entrepreneurs and turned more of us into sellers. Second, Elasticity. Whether we work for ourselves or for a large organization, instead of doing only one thing, most of us are finding that our skills on the job must now stretch across boundaries. And as they stretch, they almost always encompass some traditional sales and a lot of non-sales sell-

ing. Finally, Ed-Med. The fastest-growing industries around the world are educational services and health care—a sector I call “Ed-Med.” Jobs in these areas are all about moving people.

If you buy these arguments, or if you’re willing just to rent them for a few more pages, the conclusion might not sit well. Selling doesn’t exactly have a stellar reputation. Think of all the movies, plays, and television programs that depict salespeople as one part greedy conniver, another part lunkheaded loser. In Chapter 3, I take on these beliefs—in particular, the notion that sales is largely about deception and hoodwinkery. I’ll show how the balance of power has shifted—and how we’ve moved from a world of *caveat emptor*, buyer beware, to one of *caveat venditor*, seller beware—where honesty, fairness, and transparency are often the only viable path.

That leads to Part Two, where I cull research from the frontiers of social science to reveal the three qualities that are now most valuable in moving others. One adage of the sales trade has long been ABC—“Always Be Closing.” The three chapters of Part Two introduce the new ABCs—Attunement, Buoyancy, and Clarity.

Chapter 4 is about “attunement”—bringing oneself into harmony with individuals, groups, and contexts. I draw on a rich reservoir of research to show you the three rules of attunement—and why extraverts rarely make the best salespeople.

Chapter 5 covers “buoyancy”—a quality that combines grittiness of spirit and sunniness of outlook. In any effort to move others, we confront what one veteran salesman calls an “ocean of rejection.” You’ll learn from a band of life insurance salespeople and some of the world’s premier social scientists what to do before, during, and after your sales encounters to remain afloat. And you’ll see why actually believing in what you’re selling has become essential on sales’ new terrain.

In Chapter 6, I discuss “clarity”—the capacity to make sense of murky situations. It’s long been held that top salespeople—whether in traditional sales or non-sales selling—are deft at problem *solving*. Here I will show that what matters more today is problem *finding*. One of the most effective ways of moving others is to uncover challenges they may not know they have. Here you’ll also learn about the craft of curation—along with some shrewd ways to frame your curatorial choices.

Once the ABCs of Attunement, Buoyancy, and Clarity have taught you how to be, we move to Part Three, which describes what to *do*—the abilities that matter most.

We begin in Chapter 7 with “pitch.” For as long as buildings have had elevators, enterprising individuals have crafted elevator pitches. But today, when attention spans have dwindled (and all the people in the elevator are looking at their phones), that technique has become outdated. In this chapter, you’ll discover the six successors of the elevator pitch and how and when to deploy them.

Chapter 8, “Improvise,” covers what to do when your perfectly attuned, appropriately buoyant, ultra-clear pitches inevitably go awry. You’ll meet a veteran improv artist and see why understanding the rules of improvisational theater can deepen your persuasive powers.

Finally comes Chapter 9, “Serve.” Here you’ll learn the two principles that are essential if sales or non-sales selling are to have any meaning: Make it personal and make it purposeful.

To help you put these ideas into action, at the end of each chapter in Parts Two and Three you’ll find dozens of smart techniques assembled from fresh research and best practices around the world. I call these collections of tools and tips, assessments and exercises, checklists and reading recommendations “Sample Cases,”

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in homage to the traveling salesmen who once toted bags bulging with their wares from town to town. By the end of this book, I hope, you will become more effective at moving others.

But equally important, I hope you'll see the very act of selling in a new light. Selling, I've grown to understand, is more urgent, more important, and, in its own sweet way, more beautiful than we realize. The ability to move others to exchange what they have for what we have is crucial to our survival and our happiness. It has helped our species evolve, lifted our living standards, and enhanced our daily lives. The capacity to sell isn't some unnatural adaptation to the merciless world of commerce. It is part of who we are. As you're about to see, if I've moved you to turn the page, selling is fundamentally human.

