

# **TELL NOT SELL:**

**Closing the deal using honesty  
and intention**

**By**

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## Introduction:

Many of you reading this will have a similar story to my own. I spent years of my life doing every kind of job I could get in attempt to find out what I was good at. I never seemed to have enough money, so moving up and earning more was always a motivating factor in how I went about every task.

I've served tables. I've been a landscaper. I've worked construction. I've painted. I've done door-to-door sales. I've worked in call centers. I've made advanced ticket sales for a theatre. I was a line cook in multiple restaurants including an all-you-can-eat southern buffet. I've worked in food production. I've driven a forklift. I've worked in logistics. I was a distribution supervisor for a huge food company. I've worked in a strap and hardware company. There are many other jobs that I have held over the years. I most recently landed back in the strap and hardware company, but instead of cutting straps and sewing, I run two divisions of the now multi-million-dollar company. With this company, I was given the opportunity to develop my own product, which is now available to the public.

To to be successful at any or all of these positions, I had to adapt to the nuances of each industry and learn to hone my skills to best suit the customer. Over the years, there have been certain aspects that suit all industries as well as customers. This guide will attempt to describe those aspects and help you to use skills you *already possess* to bring home the best sales. In turn, you will be building great relationships with happy customers that come back to you time and time again. Your honesty, knowledge, and intention will help you to tell them, not sell them.

## **Chapter 1: Know yourself**

What I am about to share with you is not rocket science. It may contain information you have heard before and either already use, or never realized you were using it. You may think you have never heard it before, but I'll bet you have. Before you can ever try to learn who your customer is, what you have to offer them, and how to best sell it to them, YOU MUST KNOW YOURSELF.

I'm not going to ask you to go on a quest to learn your innermost, deepest, truest self (Although I wouldn't tell you that it was a bad idea). I will only ask that you take a close enough look at yourself to assess what makes you tick. How are you easily sold to? Do you even want to be sold to? How do you best communicate? What makes you most receptive to conversation? What attracts you to people? Are you able to communicate with strangers? Are you a good lie detector? Are you truthful? Do you get nervous communicating?

The answers to these questions are incredibly important to know about yourself if you wish to be a persuader or educator of others. If you don't know how to best assess yourself, you will not be able to assess others. Knowing the skill, you do or don't possess, the way you best communicate, and how you react in public are key to reading your customer to best serve them.

People will always be receptive to those that communicate in a similar way to them. Great communicators can see how others communicate, match the style and intensity of another's communication, and listen well to the person they are speaking with.

Listening is such a huge part of success in communication. We will touch upon this in a later chapter.

For now, sit down and ask yourself some questions and write down some short answers:

1. Someone you have never met approaches you. You don't know whether to trust them or not. As they are approaching, before they speak, what are you most aware of as they approach? What makes you want to talk to them? What makes you NOT want to talk to them?

2. For you to trust them, what do you need to see and/or hear from them to help them gain your trust?

3. What do you notice about yourself as he/she is approaching you? Are you defensive because you do not know the person? Do you back away from them at first? Why?

4. Would you say that you are an approachable person?

5. What are you thinking about when the person is talking to you? Are you thinking about their appearance? Their voice? Are you listening to what they are saying?

Your answers to these questions are the exact things one must always be aware of not only when being approached, but when approaching others. The answers you wrote down often will be the same for most people across the board.

For question 1, many people will say they are most aware of whether the person is coming toward them in a menacing way, or if they are approaching cautiously. Do they have a weapon? Do they have a gift? If they have a gift or are approaching in a non-threatening way, you may

be more likely to be open to the meeting. If they have a knife or a gun, you may just run away. These seem like obvious answers but are directly related to how you will be viewed when approaching a possible new customer.

Something as simple as having your business card in your hand outstretched can be viewed more in the way of a weapon instead of as a gift. You may view it as a gift in that you are offering it to the person as an introduction, but some people immediately rear back, thinking to themselves, "Oh no. What are they going to try to sell me?" This could immediately end the possibility of the conversation ending in a sale. Many people don't want to be sold. They don't want to hear your pitch without first being primed by their own interest in your product.

Many times, outstretching your hand for a handshake, empty, and a smile on your face, will result in a more positive reception than a card or a sample. Meet the *person* first. Show interest in learning who they are before trying to sell to them.

Let's think about question 2. I can bet that your answers to this question may have included a smile? I have an issue that my wife has pointed out to me on occasion. I tend to get into deep thought or become incredibly determined. This translates into a facial expression that she calls my "Mad Chad" face. My brow furrows and my eyes narrow. It is not that I am mad at all, just that my face shows thought and determination in that way. This is something I have tried to be hyper aware of. Now, I make a conscious effort to take a deep breath, let my face relax a bit, and smile before I approach anyone. I want to let the person I am approaching know that I have the best of intentions and am approaching them in a gentle, non-violent way.

Many people will say that they want to see a presentable appearance from those approaching them. Being disheveled or dirty or unkempt can subconsciously make the person you are approaching distrust your intentions. It doesn't matter if you have nice or expensive clothes, or the like. It is more important that it look like you care enough about yourself to take care of yourself. People are generally more likely to WANT to talk to someone that looks like they care about themselves and, in turn, them.

Question 3 is important. As you approach someone you have to be able to immediately decide whether they want to be approached at all. If a person immediately becomes defensive or backs away from you, it is an immediate indicator that they may not be receptive to you whether you are selling something or not. Try to be aware of them and their demeanor before you get too close.

As for question 4, if you consider yourself approachable, why is that? What do you personally do that lets people know that they can approach you? These indicators are exactly the type of indicators you want to see in a person to insure you will have a better chance at a successful introduction. If they look approachable, they probably are. That doesn't mean that they won't just tell you to shove off when you approach them, but your chances will most likely be better!

Your answers to question 5 reveal whether you are listening. Looking someone in the eye when they are speaking to you relays to them that you are truly listening and that they can trust that you have actual interest in what they are saying. This is important in successful communication for both the giver and the receiver.

It has been said that we should treat others as we would like to be treated. This is true when it comes to communication as well. Be conscious of how approachable you are. Think about how you react and why. Be aware of how well you are listening. When you know all these things about yourself, you will know how to communicate well with others.



## Chapter 2: Know your product

I cannot stress enough how important this step truly is. Your entire conversation with a prospective client could be ruined in an instant if you don't have the knowledge necessary to answer any questions that arise. To prevent this instant sale-killer, you must be intimately educated in your product, product line, service, options, etc.

I once had a conversation with a man at an annual trade show in Las Vegas. We were having a great talk. I was speaking casually about a product that he had inquired about. I was *telling* him about the product. I wasn't really trying to *sell* him on it yet. He was asking a lot of questions. I was answering them honestly and thoroughly and it seemed his next question came directly after each answer. I was happy to educate him. Eventually, he turned to me and looked me in the eye. He asks me, "How long have you been doing this?"

"Doing what?" I asked.

"Working for this company; selling these products." He says.

"Just over a year, why?"

"Well, I have to tell you. I appreciate you talking to me about this stuff and answering all my questions. It seems like you have an answer for everything. Usually, when someone has a quick answer to my every question, I think they are just trying to sell me or pull one over on me. The difference with you is that *I believe* you. I believe your answers. I think you believe in this product *yourself!* I trust you now and I don't feel like you are just trying to get my money." He said.

Wow. This was the first time someone had ever said anything like that to me in a business setting. For me, it was a confirmation that I was doing it right. The best part is that I wasn't doing anything. All I was doing was talking about a product I know and believe in while trying to help someone understand it themselves. I hadn't needed to try to sell the guy. I just had to tell him.

This occurrence was also the first time I realized that it wasn't necessary to have a "spiel" or "sales pitch". I just needed to be able to freely speak about my product. That was the best sales pitch I could have ever needed. I realized that it was my knowledge of the product that made the conversation go so well. Also, that knowledge allowed me to be completely honest about it. I was honest, informative, believable, and at the same time confident.

*You must know your product as thoroughly as you possibly can.* If you are a server, you need to know the menu. This includes every possible change, option, add-on, pricing, discount, combination, flavor, and ingredient on that menu.

If you are selling seats at a theatre, you need to know the events, the seating chart, the pricing, the best view in the house, etc. You have to know it to tell it. Not *sell* it but *tell* it. This holds true for ANY product or service that is offered in ANY industry ANYWHERE in the world.

If you already have the knowledge, then the questions that are asked don't stall the telling process. The conversation is fluid. Your clear, quick, concise, and honest answers show that you have knowledge and that you can be trusted.

Many people worry that if they tell someone that their product has a limitation, or someone asks about an unavailable option, that their answer may *ruin* the sale. This could be true. You might just lose the sale, but if you must tell someone “no” because it is the truth, TELL THEM NO! It is better to be honest and lose the sale than ever be untruthful and end up losing their *trust*. Often your honesty will not only gain their trust, but they may be more willing to deal with the limitation than to lose the option of doing business with you. Plus, they may not buy the product or service in question from you but may return to you for another product or service later because they already trust you.

You are not only telling the person about your product. You are also telling them about yourself. People need to be able to trust *you* to trust *your product*. Concern yourself first with having a good conversation and building a good relationship and rapport. These are the foundations for your possible repeat business later.

## Chapter 3: The importance of intention

I'm sure you have heard this idea before. You may have heard it and not even realized it. There are countless books, movies, pamphlets, journals, speeches, blogs, and websites about the subject of intention. This is all for good reason. The idea of intention has been paramount in many people's success in life, mine included.

Loosely defined, intention is the act of determining mentally upon an action or result. If you believe it will happen and focus on the result while moving in action to create it, it will be so.

I use intention in my own life all the time. Catholics pray prayers of intention to the Saints. Many people practice yoga and visualize in their minds to attract outcomes in their lives. People use positive visualization for healing. All these acts fall under the definition of intention.

When I was working one of my former jobs, I had become very unhappy and stressed and did not look forward to going to work every day. I was being paid very well, but I did not enjoy my job. I had been speaking with my wonderful mother about this. She had always taught me to seek out what makes me happy in life and move with incredible intention toward it and it would be achieved. I had become complacent in my job. I figured that since I was making good money, I should just stay there, unhappy or not. I was working long hours, was stressed, and my stress was affecting my home life with my fiancé at the time. In short, I was bringing my stress home with me.

My mother reminded me that I am the creator of my destiny. I began to intend being happy at my job. I prayed for it. I pictured myself

enjoying my job again. I woke up and decided I was going to be happy at work, no matter the circumstances.

VERY shortly after beginning my intention journey, I was laid off.

The company I was working for downsized after a major acquisition and eliminated nine positions, including my own. I was devastated. I had worked for the company for ten years and had worked my way up from the lowest production position to a major supervisory role. I couldn't believe that I was done, just like that, after giving so much of myself to the company.

Don't forget that I was unhappy at that job. I was immediately without the job I was unhappy at, and already missed it and the livelihood it provided me. I told my mother what happened, and as usual, she put it into perspective for me. "Well, Peanut." she said. She calls me Peanut. "You knew you were unhappy, right? You were already intending to be happier in your job, right? Well, maybe the universe is responding to your intention. It has now opened a door for you to go out and find exactly what makes you happy and do that! Now all you have to do is continue to intend and the job you enjoy more will show itself to you."

I knew she was right. At least I really hoped she was. She usually is. So, I continued my intention journey, even more fervently. I began to pound the pavement looking for another job. I applied for positions that suited the skills I had gained in my former position. I wanted to continue to move up monetarily, but this time I sought out jobs that I felt would be a little more fun and make me feel like I was making more of a difference.

During my job-hunting times, I was playing in a band. I have issues with having to be organized. I don't feel right if certain things in my life aren't a certain way. One of these things is my musical instruments and equipment. I need my cables and cords to be rolled up. I need indicators on those cords that allow me to know how long they are and such, and that they are mine. At home, I was working on a design for a strap that would help me organize and personalize my cables, both for prevention of theft as well as peace of mind. This was simply going to be for my personal use.

One of the key materials used in my design was a special size and type of "Velcro". I had been buying the material at a craft store, but it was quite expensive. I remembered a strap and hardware company I had worked for in the past. The owners were always so nice to me and had treated me like I was one of their family members, so I called them to see if they were still offering the materials I needed. They were, and I knew that I would much prefer to buy it from them and would probably get a better price.

I was invited to their shop, which was immense in comparison to the garage the company was working out of when I was employed with them. The owners were so receptive to me and inquired what I had been doing for over a decade. I told them my story as they were showing me around the new facility. Near the end of my visit, the owners asked me to give them my number and asked if we could keep in touch. Of course, I was happy to.

That night, as I was returning to my home to use the materials I had just purchased, I received a call from them. They wanted me to come in to interview for a job that they had open in a customer service

role. I was intrigued and was incredibly impressed with the growth of their company. In a way, we all had experienced growth over a span of time. I had grown in my education and experience in business, and they had expanded into a three division, multi-million-dollar company.

I went in to interview and interviewed well. I left there feeling like I had done well. Later that night, I got the call that they would like to offer me the position, but it paid at a rate that I could not afford to accept as it would not cover my minimum budget. I regretfully and politely denied the position.

My fiancé and I had a trip to Hawaii planned long before I was let go from the previous company. I put my job hunt on hiatus and left for Hawaii. I continued to intend in my mind to find a job that I would be happy with and would love. I focused on the outcome of some of the applications I had already submitted. I focused on new opportunities to come my way. I also kept my eyes peeled for any lucrative job possibilities in Hawaii (I love the big Island).

We enjoyed our vacation and one night near the end of our trip, I received another call from the owners of the strap company. They asked if I would be willing to come back in once I had returned from my vacation to speak about another opportunity. I accepted.

I visited the facility again and they sat me down and offered me a position as a division manager. I would be managing as the head of their pet products division. They told me how much it would pay and I told them that I would think about it and contact them shortly with my reply. I went home and discussed the job with my fiancé. We crunched the numbers and concluded that the offer would still not cover my minimum budget needs. I really wanted to work for these wonderful

people again, but I had to make sure that I could pay my rent and gas every month. It was a hard decision to make, but I had to regretfully decline. Again. I apologetically informed the owners of my decision and they asked me to tell them how much I needed to make, minimum, to accept the position. I told them my absolute bottom line. They called me later that evening, accepting my asking rate.

I was elated. I was going to be able to use my skills in a management position. I would have some say in the process, products, and how the division would run as a team. I was told I would be on a short-term plan to make a significant amount more than I was making, closer to what I had made formerly with the other company. I saw myself being much happier working in my new position and I was right.

I had intended to be happy in my job and the perfect position presented itself to me! It gets even better! Six months after I was hired, I was doing so well for the division that the owners offered for me to take over a second division of the company. This division dealt with straps for the music industry, like guitar straps and accessories. I accepted that position as well and managed sales and operations of two divisions.

Intention was still working for me. I never stopped intending to be successful and happy. Remember the cord and cable organizing product I had created at home? I asked my bosses to sign a non-compete/non-disclosure agreement and presented them with my product. Keep in mind that this product was the reason I ended up with the strap and hardware company again. They loved my idea and offered to produce and market the product and I could receive a royalty off each sale. Wow! Not only was my product going to be professionally produced



but would have a venue for sale and marketing and I would benefit from it. Something I created would be available for the public to use and enjoy as well! I could have never imagined that something I created solely for my own use would become a marketable, sellable, retail-ready finished good.

If I had not intended for all of this to be possible, I may not have been as open to the possibilities as they arose. I may not have benefitted so much from my decisions. I took a significant pay cut, but gained a position that I enjoyed, felt valued at, was successful, and advanced one of my own inventions.

So, after this long story, you may ask what this has to do with the art of the sale. *Everything*. Your intention when approaching, conversing, selling, following up, and maintaining an account will directly be reflected in the outcome of those interactions. If you intend to have a friendly conversation and introduction, you will. If you intend to offer the best service, concise information, and highest quality interactions, you will. If you want to be confident in your sales pitch, you will be. Your intention should always be to make a connection that leaves you feeling good, leaves them feeling good, and hopefully ends in a transaction.

*Your intention will carry over to every aspect of your life.* You will begin to see the outcome of your positive intention in ways you would have never imagined before. This is one of the most important skills to have as a secret to success that will help you attract all the best of life to yourself.

## Chapter 4: Starting the conversation

For some starting the conversation can be the hardest part of conveying your product or message to the public. In a perfect world people would be crawling over each other to get to you and your product. It is so much easier to start a conversation when someone makes an inquiry. They have done all the work to get the dialogue going. All that is left is to tell them about your product.

Unfortunately, that is not usually the case. It is often your goal and responsibility to gain enough interest to introduce your product. All of this harkens back to the idea of knowing yourself and understanding how approachable you are. Think about the aspects that make you approachable and determine if your target individual has any of those attributes. Find something that you find interesting about them that you could comfortably talk about. They might have a t-shirt on with a band you know of or like. They may have identifiers like military service or first responder. They could be representing their favorite team sport. These things are all great conversation starters. Focus on something *other than* the product or sale. Get them talking about something they are already interested in. This gives them and yourself in turn a feeling for how to best communicate. The awkwardness of the conversation is lessened by priming the dialogue with fun or interests.

Now the conversation has started. The hard part is over. You are showing interest in them and it will reflect in their interest in you. A trust has been built as if you already know each other. Since the trust is there in a sense, you can talk about what is interesting to you. Segue into what you do and your products as an interest of your own. Make sure to portray that it is not just what you do for a living and a source of

income, it is something that you believe in and holds your interest. Interesting things can be viral. Your interest could possibly spark their interest and even a call to action. On the other hand, they could be completely disinterested. If this is the case, don't hold them there in attempt to force the issue. Let them know you are grateful that you got to meet them and talk. Thank them and let them know that you can be a resource if they ever need your product or services, or even just a friendly conversation. Give them your information if they are open to it and then *make yourself available to them*. Make good on your unspoken promise to continue the conversation should it arise. Remember that you built some trust during your talk and it is your responsibility to maintain that trust.

You may never speak to this person ever again. You may not hear from them in what feels like forever and then hear from them out of the blue. They may call you back later the same day. You never know.

If you have followed these guidelines, you have done your very best to start the conversation. Your intention is still to share your product in hopes for a sale. Continue to intend this. You may very well end up receiving the outcome you are looking for. Don't ever give up on them and be open to the opportunity to serve them in the future.

If you are lucky enough to continue the conversation, or they immediately show interest, make the most of the opportunity. Don't steamroll them or hit them with too much information. When someone opens the door to their home, they are not necessarily asking you to run in the house and make yourself at home. The same is true for your ongoing dialogue. One of the most important aspects of this, simply put, is *listen*.

## Chapter 5: Listen

So, the person you are dealing with is interested in talking further about your product. This doesn't mean it is your turn to talk. It is your turn to *listen*.

Their interest has most likely sparked questions in their mind. Their brain has begun gathering the list of questions that, when answered, can make them even more comfortable and interested in your product. If you begin to bombard them with information, you are simply trying to *sell* your product. A better way is to *tell* them about it by answering their questions honestly and thoroughly.

If they don't immediately start asking you questions, ask *them* what you can tell them about your product. Now, you've put the ball in their court and made it easy for them to ask you what they have been thinking about until now. Listen very carefully to the questions they are asking. Take each question as an opportunity to gain their trust by being completely honest. Tell them no when they ask you if you can do something that you can't. Let them know your limitations. At the same time, be mindful of sharing the benefits of your products as well. Listen carefully to their reaction. When they tell you something they do or don't like about your product, reiterate to them what you've heard in their reaction first before coming up with a retort or explanation. Don't make excuses for shortcomings. Embrace the shortcomings and focus on how your product can benefit them regardless. I can guarantee that they will be appreciative of your honesty, even if you can't fulfill their need. The person you are talking to will most definitely let you know what they need, what they like, and what they are willing to pay for.

The key is to be truly listening for those clues or statements that help you to best serve them.

Remember, your intention is not to sell to them. Your intention is to best serve them by being informative, concise, and truthful in your business. Always maintain that you are there to serve them before yourself. The better service and trust that you offer will result in a good outcome for both individuals involved. You will have at least had the pleasure of speaking to them about your product, and they will at least walk away better informed and hopefully more interested in buying.

## Chapter 6: Service before self

The idea of service before self is one adopted by many businesses, non-profits, and fraternal organizations. It is an important and effective way to look at your own dealings in business, home life and interactions with other people. We all want to feel as if we have helped someone. This is true for the smallest of kindnesses all the way to the largest scale philanthropic endeavors.

This is just as important to adopt in your education of the public about your product. Your dealings should come from a place of trying to serve the customer best as your number one priority. This should always come first before making a profit. Don't get me wrong, making a profit is great, but if it is your priority, it will become a detriment to your goal. Profits will come. They will be the result of serving the customer before yourself.

I once met a young lady at a trade show. She had entered my booth with questions, but she obviously did not want to be *sold* to. I distinctly remember her first statement.

"I have some questions, but I am not buying anything from you today." She said. This was before we even got to introduce ourselves. I knew as soon as she said it that she had been bombarded all day with pushy sales people and did not want to continue the trend. I was happy to oblige. She began to ask me questions about my product before relaying any of her own information about her project. She had very direct and specific questions which I answered for her. We spent quite some time discussing all her questions and concerns. She eventually began to give me hints as to what she was doing. After she became

comfortable with the fact that I was going to help her however I could, she became more detailed and had let all her walls down in dealing with me.

This went on for some time and she periodically reminded me that she was not buying anything and just needed to ask questions. After answering her questions, we both realized that we had been talking for quite some time. It was obvious that it was time to wrap things up and I had successfully answered all the questions she had for me.

She stood up and extended her hand to shake mine. “I just want you to know,” she said, “that I really appreciate you talking to me in such detail, even though you could have been talking to someone else who was going to spend money.”

“No problem,” I said. “You obviously know what you are doing and what information you need. I’m glad I was here to help you and I truly hope you find exactly what you need to be successful. Whether you use us or not, allow me to give you my card in case you ever need me as a resource. Feel free to call me anytime if you need my help. It was a pleasure speaking to you and I am happy to have met you.”

My intention was to help her. To serve her. I already knew that the prospect of a sale was minimal, because she blatantly told me so. I could appreciate her honesty. I wanted to help her the best I could regardless. In the end, she did not end up using us for production of her product. She did end up calling me, though. I was glad to hear from her. She relayed all the details about her product that she had omitted before. It turned out that she was having trouble sourcing one of the components for her product and that one of my company’s sister

companies kept those components in stock at a better price that she had yet found. To this date, she still orders that component from us. Even though we are not producing her product, we were still able to help her and make a profit in the end. I am currently assured that if there was ever a need for another resource, she will consider me and my company.

I put my intention to serve her before my intention to make a profit from doing business with her. In the end, we both benefitted from our meeting.

I believe that we need to always have service before self in our scope. If we all took the selfishness out of business, and life in general, and inserted service instead the world would become a much better place. Doing good does you good. I have faith in the fact that serving others is a service to self. I have seen it at work and continue to see it every day.