



*authentic  
selling*

a better way to do what you do.

Marc A. Corsini

# **Authentic Selling**

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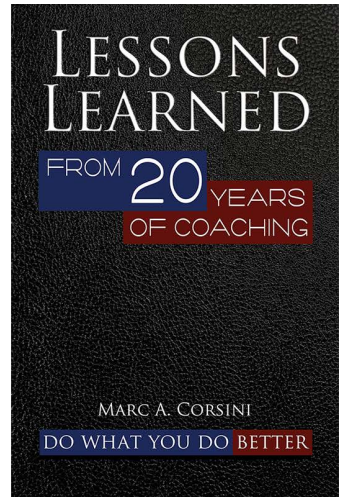
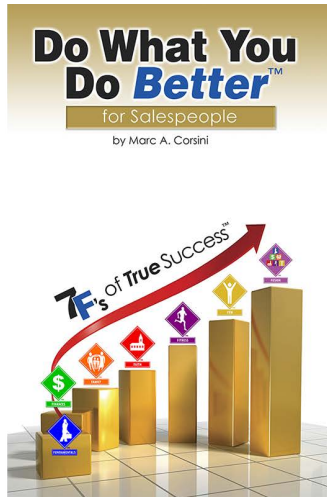
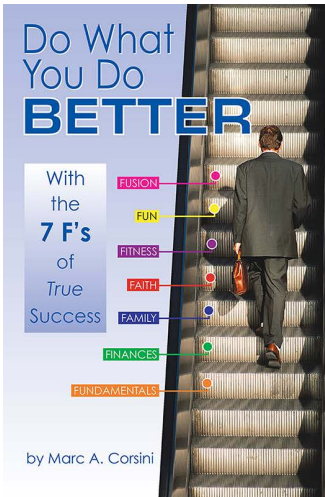
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# Introduction

About five years ago, I started to recognize that the selling profession had changed in a profound and important way. The things I'd learned as a salesperson and then communicated as a sales coach didn't feel quite right to me. The selling environment was different, but I couldn't put my finger on exactly what it was at the time.

I had, however, come to the realization that cold calling didn't work. Considering the amount of effort it took, the results were minimal. It seemed to me that for most salespeople, cold calling burned an enormous amount of energy that could be better utilized elsewhere. I felt this so strongly that I went public with the idea. I began coaching my clients that cold calling was *not* the way to go about finding new customers and developing new relationships.

The response was mixed. A few executives pulled me aside and asked that I not coach against cold calling. I asked them to trust me and give me a chance to introduce alternatives to cold calling. Over time, even the most doubtful became converts. And pretty soon, I began to see more and more experts coming around to the same conclusions.

Since I had refuted one of the most fundamental selling theories—one that a whole industry and I had embraced for decades—I decided to look a little closer at my other sales fundamentals. I wanted to see what else might need to change in order to keep pace with this dynamic profession.

The result of that exploration is the **Authentic Selling** model. This fresh, new approach to selling involves nine interconnected and vital characteristics that place a high value on real, meaningful relationships. This was years in the making.

In the consulting business, people pay for the truth. They are willing to spend money for expertise and for thoughtful, independent assessments of what they should and should not do. Our **Authentic Selling** model extends that common-sense approach to the sales arena. Centered on validity and truth and an unwavering commitment to the customer, the **Authentic Selling** model is a big-picture approach to your job where success in one area leads to success in others.

I think you'll find this to be one of the most logical, comfortable and authentic selling approaches you'll ever try. Our goal, as always, is to show you a better way to do what you do.

## The AUTHENTIC Selling Model

*“The world is changing very fast. Big will not beat small anymore; it will be the fast beating the slow.”*

— **Rupert Murdoch**

The more things change ... the more you have to change with them. The selling profession is never, ever static—even, perhaps especially, during tough times. Successful selling has become harder—and not just because of the economy.

In the past, people often embarked on a career in sales when they couldn’t find a job doing anything else. It used to be easy to make this your profession, and, in many cases, if you worked hard enough, you could be quite successful. Today, selling is anything but easy—and it takes much more than just hard work. The price of admission to today’s selling game includes business savvy, product knowledge, people skills, time management talents, technology acumen and an advisor-like mentality. And, yes, it still takes hard work, too!

In the old days, it was all about hustle. There was no substitution for hustle. Today, it is about *focused* hustle that is strategic in nature.

People don’t want PowerPoint. They don’t need talkers—especially generalists. If they want to know more about your product or service, all the buyer has to do is click on the Internet or watch a YouTube video. Chances are they have someone on staff who already knows enough about your services that listening to you talk about them might even be a waste of everyone’s time.

Many salespeople are still using sales models that were formalized in the 1920s. They are still following advice of authors like Edward K. Strong, who, in 1924, wrote *The Psychology of Selling Life Insurance*. He talked about creating interests, overcoming objections and techniques for closing the sale. Thanks to Strong and others, selling was no longer an art or a knack; if you could follow a “how-to” book, you could do it.

Next, there was the infamous “sales funnel.” For years, salespeople have used the idea of a sales funnel with the AIDA acronym created in 1898 by E. St. Elmo Lewis (**a**wareness, **i**nterest, **d**esire and **a**ction). The idea was (and still is in many cases) to move a prospective buyer through the funnel until you “closed ‘em.”

I, like so many other salespeople, learned the features and benefits model of selling. Here, you talk up the “features” of your product and then discuss the “benefits” of the buyer using your product. Buyers today are way too sophisticated for that approach! As I said before, they probably already know the benefits of your product or service nearly as well as you do.

Selling today is more than just qualifying, building rapport, educating and closing.

Today, the professional salesperson must start out as an advisor to the client. Don't just tell them what your product does; tell them what it does *specifically for them*. You have to talk about saving them time, increasing *their* revenue, reducing *their* down time, lowering *their* costs, limiting *their* risks, etc.

In this book, we are going to review our new selling model, which we call **Authentic Selling**. This new approach is something we've spent the past five years developing.

Our **Authentic Selling** model is made up of nine characteristics.

1. **A**dvisor
2. **U**ndisputed Results
3. **T**rust
4. **H**elpful
5. **E**mpathetic
6. **N**atural
7. **T**hought Leader
8. **I**ntegrity
9. **C**ollaboration

In the coming chapters, you'll learn *exactly* how to make this advanced and innovative system work for you.

## **CORSINI'S POINT**

The selling profession continues to evolve, and, in order to compete you need to change, too. I challenge you to adopt a better and more natural method of selling. I believe our Authentic Selling model is exactly that. It is a more effective and more intuitive way to succeed in sales.

## Meet Today's Buyers

*“Use the same measure for selling  
that you use for purchasing.”*

— Abu Bakr

We are going to spend the next several chapters showing you how you can use our **Authentic Selling** model to better meet and overcome any new challenges in today's selling arena. But first, let's meet today's buyers. They are, after all, in more control than ever before. You need to know them before you can successfully sell to them.

**Today's buyers are:**

- **Sophisticated.** To say the least, buyers are smart and educated. Forget about the old days when the seller was in control of product knowledge. If anyone is going to be stymied in a sales situation, it is probably going to be the salesperson! I hear every day from salespeople who feel like the buyer is taking advantage of them. They say the buyer wasn't “up front” with them about their intentions. I say these salespeople are underestimating their buyers and the new sales playing field.
- **Informed.** Today, all manner of information is readily available. The buyers don't think they need the salesperson in order to get the information they want. And, in many cases, they don't! Not if they have an Internet connection. Eric Berridge, cofounder of Bluewolf research, revealed that 70% of a customer's buying decision is made *before* a salesperson even gets involved.
- **Invisible.** Because today's buyers are so well informed (even before talking to you), they can stay hidden. You can't get to them—and they won't let you in—until *they* are ready. If at all.
- **Capable.** Today's buyers have multiple ways to acquire products and services. In fact, buyers have more options than ever before. In many cases, they are just one click away from buying whatever they need and what—including what you offer.
- **Impatient.** In today's marketplace, speed is absolutely everything. Amazon.com has made the one-click buying experience one of the easiest things going. It's as fast as you can get—so far. Trust me, no buyer wants you to get back to them next week—they want what they want ... *now*.
- **Discerning.** To reach today's buyers you have to bring something irresistible to the table. They want a great idea, valuable insight into their industry, or a better way to do their job or run their company. Also, buyers want to reduce your offering down to a commodity. If they can do that—and they will do



everything they can to do that—then price is the main consideration, and low price wins!

Buyers are in control of their own destinies today. You know because you are one of them! Turn the tables, and take a look.

You are sophisticated. You know what you want, and you want it now. You are not going to be taken advantage of because you have multiple options for buying. You will pay a premium but *only* if you can clearly see the advantage of paying more.

## CORSINI'S POINT:

Today's buyers are in control. They decide what and when and how much they will purchase. They are informed, sophisticated, able and discerning. They can intelligently shop everything from eye surgery to sushi to insurance. Our **Authentic Selling** model will give you an edge with today's shrewd and selective buyers.

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## THINK ABOUT THIS:

- How are buyers changing in your profession?
- What do *you* need to change about how you approach today's buyers?
- What is one change you can make today, right now, so you can immediately better sell to the new buyer of today?

# Chapter 3

## What’s In and What’s Out

*“Change, before you have to.”*  
— Jack Welch

We just talked about buyers and how they have changed. Now, let’s take a fun and informative look at the business of selling and consider **“What’s In”** and **“What’s Out”** in this changeable profession:

IN	OUT
	
Long-term Based	Transaction Based
Experts & Thought Leaders	Cold Calling
Warm Calling	Educating
Idea Sharing	Generalists
Us	Me
Conversations	Presentations
Listeners	Fast Talkers
Relationship Capital	Favors
Team Players	Lone Rangers
Collaboration	Buyer – Seller
Blogs	Sales Funnel
Drip Marketing	Brochures
Right Now!	Closers
Industry Experts	Advertising
Amicable	Next Week
Top 100 Relationships	Products Specialists
Niche Masters/Specialists	Aggressive
Left Brain & Right Brain	Right Brain
Authentic Partners	

Thinking about the previous ins and outs, let’s apply the Authentic Selling model and see how this approach compares to what’s trending.

IN	OUT
Advisor	Seller
Undisputed Results	Get it Done & Closed
Trust	Flattery
Helpful	Sense of Urgency
Empathetic	Aggressive
Natural	Tricks & Techniques
Thought Leaders	Generalists
Integrity	Make Lots of Money
Collaboration	Competition

So many things have changed (and are currently changing!) in the selling profession. Before you can take advantage of the **Authentic Selling** model, you might have to rethink almost everything you have learned about selling up to this point. That’s a bold statement, and we don’t make it lightly. But succeeding in today’s selling arena requires bold action. Many of the sales-training models of the past simply no longer fit or just don’t work in today’s business environment. You need to make your own adjustments to keep up and then overachieve.

**CORSINI’S POINT:**

To truly be successful in today’s sales profession, you might have to recalibrate many of the things you learned previously in your career. Selling is more than features and benefits, tricks and techniques and being aggressive. The playing field has changed—and for the better, in many cases. I once heard a sales trainer say, “Buyers are liars.” What a terrible way to approach a relationship! That mentality is most definitely out. What’s in is this: You should be authentic in everything you do regarding your relationships. Authenticity in all things really does encompass all things. Do that, and you’ll discover—and profit from—a better way of doing what you do.

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## **THINK ABOUT THIS:**

- **Consider our what's in and what's out list. What are you doing that's definitely in? What are you still doing that's out?**
- **What do you need to rethink about how you approach your relationships?**
- **What do you need to stop doing?**
- **What do you need to start doing or do more of as you rethink your relationships?**
- **What is one thing you can do more of today that moves you away from your old way of approaching a relationship and closer to the actions of today's sales professional?**

## Be an Advisor

*“The golden rule for every businessman is this: Put yourself in your customer’s place.”*

— Orison Swett Marden

Let’s now look at *exactly* how to make the **Authentic Selling** system work for you. We’ll break it down and individually discuss all nine characteristics of the **Authentic Selling** model. In talking about “What’s In” and “What’s Out” in the selling profession, I listed as “In” all the parts of our AUTHENTIC Selling acronym:

**A**dvisor

**U**ndisputed Results

**T**rust

**H**elpful

**E**mpathetic

**N**atural

**T**hought Leader

**I**ntegrity

**C**ollaboration

Let’s begin with **A—Advisor**. That’s what today’s buyers want in a professional salesperson (whether they know it or not). I believe I made a bold statement when I said being a “seller” is out and being an “advisor” is in. I also believe it’s true. Let me explain why.

Once upon a time, the salesperson’s job was to present their product and/or service to the buyer and persuade them to buy it. It didn’t matter if that product was a commodity or a complex solution, you discussed the features and benefits of what you were selling, and you helped the buyer determine that your offering was right for them.

In a consultative sales situation, you asked all types of discovery questions and hoped that the answers would point to your solution. The best outcome—for you—would have the conversation match up with what you were offering.

The questioning phase of the consultative model was never a diagnostic to determine the right thing for the buyer; instead, it was a way to direct the buyer back to your solution.

That kind of ultimately selfish approach is out—O.U.T. out! In the **Authentic Selling** model, the salesperson becomes an advisor to the client.

In working with an advisor, you are relying on someone to give you an independent and honest (authentic) opinion of how to proceed—this opinion is based on the advisor’s expertise, experience, and real understanding of your problem or goal.

Fill that need for your customers! Be all in. Be an advisor, and you’ll understand their business like no one else—and you’ll stand out from the crowd as a result.

When you approach the buyer as an advisor, you are changing your thinking from, “What’s in it for me?” to “What should *they* do—or not do?” You are thinking in terms of, “What’s the right thing to do here?”

I’ll compare these various approaches to an orthopedic surgeon assessing an athlete’s injury. If the surgeon thinks only of himself or herself, then every injury to every knee will lead to the operating table because that’s where the big bucks are for the doctor. There is very little financial incentive to say that the patient simply has a sprained or stressed knee.

It sounds absurd, of course, because I’m exaggerating. Yet, many salespeople in the past sold without much regard for the buyer, without caring whether or not their offering was in the best interests of the client. Sealing the deal was what mattered.

Today’s successful salesperson goes into a sales situation with an advisor’s attitude. Their job is to understand the customer’s needs, problems and goals and determine if what they are selling is indeed a good fit for the buyer. If yes, the advisory salesperson proceeds. If not, they tell the buyer: “No, what I’m selling is not really what you need.” If you want to earn long-term trust, gain credibility and show that you have the buyer’s best interests in mind—then saying “no” or “not now” can be the most powerful recommendation you’ve ever given! Be authentic, and then, when you later tell them, “Yes, I have exactly what you need,” you’ll have a trusting, open-minded, engaged and *receptive* buyer.

It’s called being an advisor. It’s also called being authentic.

## **CORSINI'S POINT:**

Our **Authentic Selling** model calls for an Advisory approach to the sales process. Buyers don't want (and they don't need!) product pushers and selfish deal closers. We all appreciate the person who is there to help us, someone who understands our needs and wants and who gives us insight and ideas about our business. Being an advisor calls for a long-term approach to your profession, but that comes with long-term benefits, too, of selling to the customer over and over—and for years! Don't sell someone on surgery when what they really need is an ACE bandage! If you do that, you'll have another problem—no credibility—and that will make it impossible to ever sell to that customer again.

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## **THINK ABOUT THIS:**

- **Who do you know who already is working as an advisor to their clients?**
- **What are they doing that makes that advisory role work?**
- **How do they demonstrate that they are an advisor to their clients?**
- **What is one thing you can do today to position yourself as a trusted advisor to your clients?**

## Only Undisputed Results

*“You reap what you sow: Life is like a boomerang. Our thoughts, deeds and words return to us sooner or later with astounding accuracy.”*

— Grant M. Bright

Let’s move along now to the **second** characteristic of our **Authentic Selling** model; following the AUTHENTIC acronym, we’ll look at **U—Undisputed Results**. Actually, let’s talk about undisputed results and you.

You’ll make yourself indispensable to the customer by being an authentic advisor to them; you’ll stay at the top of your game with undisputed results.

**Undisputed results** are measurable, notable results that are *beyond reproach*. This is sales success that no one can question. People will marvel at your success, but that’s all they’ll do. They cannot question how you got there because you always operate on the up and up. Always.

Let me be specific and offer a scenario of *disputed* success. Perhaps you’ve heard people talk about a top-producing salesperson using comments like, “Yeah, he sold a lot, but talk to some of the people who bought from him; they’ll tell you they felt like he took advantage of them.” I call this *disputed* success. Yes, it’s still technically success, but at a cost—a *big* cost.

I’ve worked with people who’ve enjoyed million-dollar sales, and yet, their clients requested their removal from the account after only six months. There’s no denying that these salespeople could be successful, but success without authenticity cannot be sustained. It will not lead to undisputed results; eventually the reasons for their removals became known. They didn’t deliver on their promises. They lost their “relationship capital,” and they lost their good reputations, too.

All this is connected. When you become an advisor to your client and you honor your business relationships and put the buyer first, you will overachieve—it just might take a little longer. But ultimately, you will obtain undisputed results, and you’ll build and enhance your reputation, too.

### CORSINI’S POINT:

The **Authentic Selling** model demands that you achieve success only through Undisputed Results. Your way of selling should enhance your reputation—not tarnish it. Our **Authentic Selling** model means you do what you say you are going to do and you deliver on the results you promised. People in and out of the office might still gossip about you—but they’ll be saying things like, “How does she always have customers who love her and who are so loyal to her?” They’ll be talking about your ability to succeed—not the collateral damage of your success.



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## **THINK ABOUT THIS:**

- **Who do you know—or know of—who has experienced significant success but at the expense of their reputation? They might be known for doing whatever it takes (good and bad) to achieve what they want.**
- **How do you feel about people like this? Do you admire them? What do you think about, how they achieved their success?**
- **Does the concept of undisputed results resonate with you, or do you see it as just a “do-gooder” kind of attitude? Why?**
- **Think about your relationships with your clients. Do you have a client—or better yet clients—where the work you have done with them has yielded undisputed results? This is a relationship about which you would welcome scrutiny. If someone called them to discuss your work, you would get a glowing review. How does that feel?**
- **Think about one thing you can do right now that will result in absolutely undisputed results with your clients.**

## Trust Inspires Confidence

*“The best way to find out if you can trust somebody is to trust them.”*

— Ernest Hemingway

The **Authentic Selling** model’s **third** characteristic, the **T** in our **AUTHENTIC** acronym, is about **Trust** and **Trustworthiness**. Again, it’s all connected. If you are an authentic **Advisor** to your client, being **Trustworthy** is just how you operate. And operating in an honest manner leads to Undisputed Results.

Trust is huge in any relationship. I’ve talked for years about the TRL principle in selling: You gotta have **trust**, **respect** and some degree of **likeability** in order to sell well. It’s a known fact that people do business with people they trust, respect and like, so it’s no surprise that trust is a vital part of our **Authentic Selling** model.

The weird thing about trust is that while you earn it every day, it can be lost in a split second. A relationship based on trust is like a bank account where you make regular deposits. Those deposits sometimes are significant, and other times they might be quite small. But they are made regularly and with the intent of growing your valuable savings. The trust you build in a relationship can grow in the same way—with events large and small that lead to the customer trusting you more and more. With a real bank account, one quick, thoughtless withdrawal and you can wipe out the entire balance. Likewise, one unethical action, one lie, one calculated mistake can obliterate all your hard-earned trust.

Consider for a moment what might happen to the great business relationship you enjoy with your top client if your competitor came in with a new, much more efficient and profitable way of doing business using the same things you offer. Remember, of course, that your customer trusts *you*, as an advisor, to keep their business top of mind.

Hopefully, your customer values your relationship enough to give you an opportunity to explain why you haven’t already brought that great, new idea to them. And maybe there’s a good reason you haven’t done so. If there isn’t, you have to own up to why. Because suddenly all the trust you have worked so hard to build is in jeopardy. Become defensive, and you’ll likely lose. Come clean, and you stand more of a chance of salvaging the relationship.

I use this example (and not a lower-price example) because in the **Authentic Selling** model, it’s your *job* as an advisor to bring new ideas and better ways to work to your customer in the first place.

They trust you to do that. Earn the customer’s trust. Keep the customer’s trust. That’s how you practice **Authentic Selling**.

## CORSINI'S POINT:

The **Authentic Selling** model demands that you are Trustworthy all the time and in all you do. Think of trust as a bank account that you deposit into daily. Realize that your balance can be wiped out with a single withdrawal. Obviously, I'm saying that lies are off limits. But you also should avoid white lies, almost-truths and little cover-ups. If you make a mistake—confess quickly. Just tell the truth. Remember, trust inspires confidence. People want to work with people they trust. Be one of those people.

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## THINK ABOUT THIS:

- To what degree do you think trust matters in a relationship?
- If it does matter, why is it so important?
- Thinking about your clients and relationships, how full is your “trust bank account?”
- How often are you making trust deposits into that account? Every day? Once in a while? Hardly ever?
- If you took a leave of absence from your job for 30 days, would others see your trust account going up or down? Are there things you would not be proud of if other people knew what you were doing?
- Would being on leave make you nervous or would you enjoy peace of mind?
- What is one thing you can do today with your clients that will increase your trust bank accounts with them?

## How Helpful Are You?

*“In about the same degree that you are helpful, you will be happy.”*

— Karl Reiland

The **H** in our **AUTHENTIC** acronym stands for **Helpful**, and this is the **fourth** characteristic of the **Authentic Selling** model.

Now, being **helpful** is an easy enough concept to understand because we all know what NOT being helpful looks like. It's the dismissive brushoff you get when you ask a restaurant server for something only to be told, “I'm sorry, you are not my table.” Then there's what I call “gracious indifference.” This is what is happening when someone is telling you what you want to hear, but you know very well they really couldn't care less about your problem; they are just trying to get you and your issue out of their way. They might seem friendly enough, but in the end, they are rarely helpful.

It is easy to be helpful to someone when they are buying something from you. You're in the moment, and their satisfaction is your sole focus. Our **Authentic Selling** model says you should bring that same attention, interest and energy to *all* aspects of your relationship—before the sale, during the sale and long after you close the deal.

I work with several people in the contract furniture business. I know how easy it is for them to be helpful while handling a \$500,000 order for a good client. But what happens 18 months later when one of this client's employees—someone you don't know—calls and says the arm of their desk chair is broken? Do you take care of it, or do you put them off? How you handle that one broken chair says quite a lot about how helpful you *really* are to your clients. That one call could turn into a defining moment.

I'm convinced that it's what you do regarding the small stuff that defines how helpful you truly are with someone. It's so easy to respond to small requests with an “I'll-get-around-to-it-soon” attitude. But that's NOT helpful, and it's NOT authentic either.

Being helpful means being consistent in your thoughtfulness and availability. It's about doing the small stuff, the tough task or the pain-in-the-neck favor that comes your way. It's how you respond to those day-in-and-day-out situations that defines you as helpful or not helpful.

## CORSINI'S POINT:

The **Authentic Selling** model requires that you take a **Helpful** approach in all that you do. We know it's easy to be helpful when people are buying. We're saying you should bring that same helpful attitude to all of your interactions with people. Strive to be helpful all the time—whether you're replacing a lost screw in the arm of a chair, meeting with the college-age child of a former client to talk about your industry or emailing a copy of a product manual to a client you inherited from a colleague who last sold them something five years ago! Approach each situation with a helpful attitude and a sense of urgency.

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## THINK ABOUT THIS:

- To what degree do you think being helpful is tied to success?
- To be truly successful as a sales professional, do you have to be helpful all the time?
- Think about an overachieving salesperson who has a helpful approach to their job. What makes this person helpful? What do they do differently? What do they do better?
- From your perspective, what makes a salesperson helpful?
- What is one thing you can do today to approach your job with a more helpful mindset?

## Employ an Empathetic Approach

*“The opposite of anger is not calmness, it’s empathy.”*

— Mehmet Oz

The **fifth** characteristic of our **Authentic Selling** model is all about being **Empathetic**. That is the **E** in our **AUTHENTIC** acronym.

When I think of empathy, I think of something that goes beyond simply understanding another person and their situation. It’s more what you do with that understanding. Empathy is a deeper feeling of connectedness, and it’s a sense of compassion that inspires positive action.

Being empathetic is a hot topic today in selling. In our model, it is a *requirement*. This isn’t a touchy-feely emotion. People want to know that you understand their problems and the challenges of getting their work done. I’m sure you’ve heard the old adage, “I want you to feel my pain.” There’s a reason why you recognize it.

I’ve worked for years with people who sell in the property and casualty business. For many of these sellers, their job involves calling on a buyer and getting that potential buyer to “fire their broker” and move the business to the seller’s company.

But there’s much more going on in this type of situation. So we talk about the seller being empathetic to the pain associated with ending a business relationship with a current supplier and the uncertainty of changing to a new one. It takes empathy (beyond understanding) to let the buyer know you recognize that moving from one supplier to another is disruptive, difficult and involves some degree of conflict. It takes empathy to identify the uncertainty that comes with making a significant change.

Empathy also involves honoring a potential customer’s long-standing relationship with your competitor. To come into a situation and proceed to slam a competitor is about as un-empathic as you can get! That doesn’t mean you have to abandon your pursuit of a potential customer. It does mean you focus more positively on how you (as an Advisor) can help that potential customer work better and smarter should their current business relationship change or if they are willing to make a change. Take it slow, go easy and honor your customer’s existing relationships. That’s an authentic and empathetic way to work.

## CORSINI'S POINT:

The **Authentic Selling** model *requires* an **Empathetic** approach to relationships. When you are with people, feel their pain, understand their problems, recognize their goals and help with their plans. Let them see that you care, and take time to take action. Follow the customer's lead, and go in the direction that is appropriate based on their situation and your interaction. Once they feel that you authentically care, there is the opportunity for trust to be built. Being empathetic brings real warmth and true compassion to a relationship. People are attracted to that. They'll want to do business in that type of environment.

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## THINK ABOUT THIS:

- When someone is being empathetic with you, how does that make you feel?
- When someone is not being sympathetic or understanding toward you about something that matters a great deal to you, what emotions do you experience?
- Why is being empathetic one of the traits tied to true success with today's sales professional?
- What is one thing you can do today to have more empathy for your clients?

## Being Natural has Real Benefits

*“You were born an original. Don’t die a copy.”*

—John Mason

Now for the **sixth** characteristic of our **Authentic Selling** model: In the AUTHENTIC acronym, N is for **Natural**.

This one should be easy. If you are a real **Advisor** to your client, your **Trustworthiness**, **Helpfulness** and **Empathy** will come **Naturally**. That’s because it’s Authentic.

Let’s take a close look at the importance of being **Natural**.

When you think of a sales rainmaker, what kind of person comes to mind? Let’s get specific and consider rainmakers in the business of commercial real estate and development. Most likely, Donald Trump would be top (or near top) of mind.

We tend to think of a rainmaker as a larger-than-life kind of figure; someone with a big, maybe even outsized, personality. They are aggressive, highly confident, forceful people who have a “take no prisoners” attitude. For years, it has been understood that if you want to be a rainmaker, you gotta act like a rainmaker—and rainmakers are “alpha dogs.”

People were encouraged to “modify their behavior” and “adapt their selling styles” to emulate that of the hard-charging rainmaker. The problem was, many people didn’t know quite how to pull this off and so ended up simply mimicking The Donald.

Our new **Authentic Selling** model is nothing like that!

First of all, to be authentic means to be yourself. Therefore, I’m encouraging you to be natural in your approach to sales. Just be yourself. You don’t have to transform who you are into someone you are not in order to be successful in sales.

As we talked about already, buyers are sophisticated. They see right through people who are disingenuous. They know insincerity when they see it! Try to be someone you are not and the buyer will ignore you or dismiss you. Believe me, they will not want to buy from you because you will not come across as trustworthy.

Now, let me be clear here: If your job requires you to interact with strangers or new potential customers and you have daily first-time conversations, you need to either naturally possess extraverted behavior or you can model that behavior



to a certain extent. That's simply rising to the occasion; I call it "show time." This is that extra spark we all employ when we have to interact with strangers and need to make a positive, lasting impression. This is how you might approach a business dinner, a networking seminar, a trade show, Webinar, Skype session, etc.

There's nothing wrong with "being on" as long as you are still being *you*.

If you are naturally very shy and feel seriously uneasy meeting new people, channeling The Donald will not make you successful. Your natural self, your introverted self, will not thrive in an environment of constant newness where you must be "on" most of the time. That doesn't mean you can't succeed in sales! Just look for a type of sales position where you deal mostly with current customers and have safe conversations. That way, you'll remain natural, and your true self can still shine.

## CORSINI'S POINT:

The **Authentic Selling** model requires a **Natural** approach to relationships. Be yourself. Be your very best self, sure, but stay true to who you are. I've found over the years that people gravitate to people who are themselves and who don't try to be somebody or something they are not. Take a natural approach to sales because being natural has real results. You'll be seen as trustworthy and empathetic, and you're more likely to succeed as an advisor to your client where you can truly be helpful. The results you'll produce will be undisputed. That's the description of a real rainmaker!

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## THINK ABOUT THIS:

- When you see someone behaving one way when a client is around and then acting entirely differently when the client is gone, what do you think about that person? Why?
- Most of us are on our very best behavior when we are working with a client. What's the difference between acting your best and not being you?
- When someone is trying to impress you by "inflating themselves," what do you think of that person?
- Are you consistently natural with your clients?
- What is one thing you can do today to be more natural with your clients?

## Become a Thought Leader

*“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.”*

— Benjamin Franklin

For the **seventh** characteristic of our **Authentic Selling** model, again following the AUTHENTIC acronym, we’ll look at the second **T**, which stands for **Thought Leader**.

In a previous chapter, I talked about “what’s in” and “what’s out” in today’s selling environment. I said that “generalists” were out and “thought leaders” were in. Let me explain what I mean by that.

Buyers today want a lot from their business relationships. They value specialists—people who are experts in their field. When these professionals talk, people listen. Their opinions matter. These are the people media folks call on when they need a comment or an explanation regarding a particular industry. Whether they are talking about business trends, current market conditions, innovations, deal flow or other industry info, what they say carries weight and brings added value to a relationship.

I believe being a thought leader is independent of age. I’ve coached people who have worked in an industry for 30 years and yet don’t seem to fully understand the real potential of their profession. On the other hand, I’ve coached people who assumed they were too young, too inexperienced or simply too new to be an expert in their field, but they were wrong. I’ve found that being a thought leader actually has little to do with the number of years spent in a job, an industry or a market and much more to do with the amount of time a person spends making himself or herself an expert. Becoming an expert is a focused process that takes commitment, study, practice, “game experience” in front of customers, a willingness to work outside your comfort zone and a whole lot of pure “want to.”

But it’s not enough to just gather the knowledge and share it with a select few. To be viewed as a real expert you have to engage on a larger scale. You have to write about what you know; you have to speak on your subject and blog about it. You need to specialize in your subject at work and outside of the office.

So it’s a twofold approach—a micro and a macro method of working within your industry. You have to know what’s going on in your industry, niche, market segment, etc. Then you have to take your better-than-average understanding and apply it to someone else’s business with an eye to helping them do what they do better. You have to work with the bigger picture in mind.

Being a thought leader and an advisor go hand in hand. Taking an advisory approach to a relationship requires that you be a thought leader, too. You have to

have that extra working knowledge to properly advise your customer. And having that knowledge, expertise and recognition makes you more attractive (and more valuable) as an advisor.

## **CORSINI'S POINT:**

The **Authentic Selling** model requires that you take your profession seriously. We encourage you to take it all a step further and become a **Thought Leader** in your industry. (Remember, people want specialists, not generalists.) In doing so, you are better able to be an advisor to your customers. Of course, being known as the expert in your industry has its payoffs for you, too. So gather your knowledge, continue your education then write about it, speak about it, blog it and tweet it. Get uncomfortable, and challenge yourself every day. Be the helpful, knowledgeable person who immediately comes to mind when people look for someone to help them become more successful. Be a trusted thought leader with your own area of expertise.

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## **THINK ABOUT THIS:**

- Who do you know who is a true thought leader in what they do each day? What do you think of those people?
- How do you treat someone whom you know is an expert in their industry?
- Why do we treat or approach thought leaders differently than we do someone with only a general knowledge of a particular subject?
- To be a thought leader, you must offer your clients unique ideas and insights into their business. You must possess knowledge far beyond that of others in your field. How would you rank yourself as a thought leader in your industry?
- What is one thing you can do today, right now, to position yourself as a thought leader with your clients?

# Integrity is Everything

*“A simple lie destroys a whole reputation of integrity.”*

— **Baltasar Gracián**

The I in our AUTHENTIC acronym stands for **Integrity**, and this is the **eighth** characteristic of our **Authentic Selling** model.

Again, it's all connected. Especially **Undisputed Results** and **Integrity**. One simply doesn't happen without the other! So let's focus on the importance of **Integrity** in **Authentic Selling**.

In business and in life, we all want to deal with honest people. We look for people who keep their word. We want to be around people we can trust. We look for people we can depend on not only in the big stuff, but for the little things, too.

I've found that one of the biggest compliments you can give to someone is to say they are “a person of integrity.” And in my 20-plus years of coaching, some of the most contentious conflicts I've encountered happened when someone's integrity was questioned. Therefore, Integrity absolutely had to have a place in our **Authentic Selling** model.

I have a simple, yet very effective, way to make sure you remain a person of integrity. It comes from my first *Do What You Do Better* book.

In any difficult situation, **ask yourself these three questions:**

- Would my parents be proud of me?
- Would my spouse respect me?
- Would my children look up to me?

If the answer is no, you need another course of action!

If you want to know how important integrity is, just ask anyone who has lost theirs. They can tell you just how precious and priceless integrity really is. Case in point: Consider Arnold Schwarzenegger. He had it all—fame as an actor and a former bodybuilder, power as governor of California, and a beautiful wife and family to boot. These accomplishments and good fortune were badly damaged when he squandered his **integrity** because of an extramarital affair, which resulted in his fathering a child with the family's nanny. His good name—and all he worked for his entire life—was gone when one terribly bad decision compromised his integrity.

Compare Arnold to Mother Teresa, Billy Graham or Colin Powell. Consider the considerable integrity of these three people. Each of their lives has been quite

different, but they all are lives of absolute integrity. And incidentally, each has enjoyed Undisputed Results—another of our **Authentic Selling** characteristics.

From time to time, we all face tests of our integrity. I'll share one of mine. I happen to love nice cars—especially those made by Mercedes-Benz. Years ago, I bought a used Mercedes, and it was my dream car. Over time though, I came to realize that while I could afford a used Mercedes, I could not afford the maintenance. So I decided to sell it. I had paid \$12K for the car, spent about \$12K in repairs and the car was worth about \$7K by the time I decided to sell it. After three long months dealing with lots of lookers, I finally got an offer.

I quickly accepted that offer; I was a motivated seller! We closed the deal, and the new owner asked me to drive the car to her office. On the way, the check-engine light came on. Now the woman knew the car was “as is” when she bought it, but I was faced with an integrity question. How should I handle this? It had taken me so long to sell the car, and I certainly didn't want it back. So I ran my decisions through my integrity test. After realizing that only one course of action would make my parents, wife and children proud, I very sadly told the buyer I'd return her money and take back the car or we could take it to the repair shop and I'd pay to fix whatever was making that light go on.

This story did have a happy ending. The buyer still wanted the car, and it didn't cost me much to fix what was wrong. And I kept my integrity intact.

Our integrity capital is added to or subtracted from with every important decision we make. Make sure you are adding to yours. Remember the French proverb, “There is no pillow so soft as a clear conscience.”

## **CORSINI'S POINT:**

In the **Authentic Selling** model, **Integrity** is everything. People want to work with someone they can trust and rely on to keep their promises. To be a person of integrity, you not only have to be a good starter, but also you need to be a great finisher. You have to be dependable, no matter how large or small the stakes or how important or insignificant a request. My three-question integrity test is a great way to make difficult decisions and keep your integrity intact.

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## **THINK ABOUT THIS:**

- **Who do you know who is a “person of integrity?” What makes that person stand out from the rest of the people you know?**
- **Everyone faces tests of their integrity at one time or another. What are you doing—or what could you do—to make sure you pass the tests?**
- **When someone compromises their integrity but wins whatever game they were competing in anyway, do they really win? Or are they running a different race than the one you are running?**
- **If integrity is so important to be truly successful today, why do people still compromise their integrity to come out on top?**
- **What is one thing you can do today to enhance your integrity with your clients?**

## Collaboration is Key

*“The basic rule of free enterprise: You must give in order to get.”*

— **Scott Alexander**

We’ll conclude the explanation of our **Authentic Selling** model with the **ninth**, and final, characteristic of the AUTHENTIC acronym. **C** stands for **Collaboration**.

To quickly recap the first **eight**: We started with the game-changing idea of being an **Advisor** to your clients. Next, I encouraged only **Undisputed Results**. I urged you to be **Trustworthy** and **Helpful** and Empathetic and to always be yourself—a **Natural** approach to your job is the best way to work. We talked about the importance of being a **Thought Leader**, and I challenged you to value and always protect your **Integrity**.

Now, let’s look at the significant benefits of **Collaboration**.

As I said before, today’s buyers are educated. They know what they want. They might, in some cases, understand your product or the application of your product/service better than you do! This is especially true if they are the actual user of what you offer.

With that in mind, you gotta realize they want to talk. Interaction is key; they want to give *their* ideas and *their* insights regarding what they want—and what you sell. When the invisible buyer of today allows you into their world, on *their* time and *their* terms, they likely are ready to collaborate. You need to be ready, too.

In a business application, collaboration is defined as this: “A cooperative arrangement in which two or more parties work jointly toward a common goal.” That common goal, of course, is success in business. I’m talking about your client’s business! Focus on *their* goals and needs. Work with them to reduce *their* costs, increase *their* revenue, save them time and limit *their* risks. Certainly, working jointly is key.

Again, it’s all connected. **Collaboration** comes easy when you’re an **Advisor** to your client. It’s a **Natural** way to work when you are truly **Helpful** and **Empathetic** to your client’s concerns. And it’s most definitely a great way to get **Undisputed Results**. With buyers more sophisticated and knowledgeable than ever, it just makes sense to collaborate with them.

## CORSINI'S POINT:

In a sales relationship, you are not the center of the universe or the star of the show—the buyer is the star. People don't want to be talked to; they want **Collaboration**. And they want to collaborate on something that's important to them and integral to reaching their goals. Be the client's advisor. Help them reach their goals, and you will reach your own goals, too. Ask questions, offer insights and ideas. Get the conversation going and the interaction flowing. Be the go-to person. To achieve real success in selling you need all nine characteristics of our **Authentic Selling** model. Collaboration completes this circle to success, and it helps people do what they do better.

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## THINK ABOUT THIS:

- Why do you think collaboration has become so important in today's selling arena?
- What barriers do you think prevent people from collaborating with their clients?
- What are some ways you can increase the collaboration with your clients? How would you start a conversation about this?
- Collaboration happens best when you ask good, open-ended, fact-finding questions. What are some questions you can ask your clients to start collaborating with them toward their goals?
- What is one thing you can do today to enhance the collaboration with one or more of your clients?



## Final Thoughts

I started this book talking about how the selling profession has changed. My goal was not to just talk about how selling has changed, but also to offer you a new kind of selling approach that is fresh, natural, engaging and effective—not only for the buyer but for you, too. Our **Authentic Selling** model, with nine important and interconnected characteristics, is that new path to success.

From the input we've received, people like it. They say, "It feels right." They describe the **Authentic Selling** model as a "win-win" that results in real, measurable success for their customers and for themselves. That tells us we are onto something. The bottom-line numbers we hear about say that this something is big—really big—for those who embrace this new style of working with customers.

**Authentic Selling** is different; it goes directly against many of the traditional sales approaches people have followed for years. But while new, it's also proven; it took me five years to develop this model, and I did so based on nearly a quarter century of coaching experience.

I encourage you to transform the way you interact with your clients. Start with the most logical change: Become an advisor to your customers. See how you stand out from your competitors. Then consider how the other characteristics of our **Authentic Selling** model just fall right into place.

For years, I've said that change can be a friend or a foe. This change could be your new best friend.

If you'd like more information on **Authentic Selling** or to subscribe to Corsini's Blog about selling, leadership and life, go to [www.corsini.com](http://www.corsini.com).

Looking forward, we're working right now to develop an Authentic Leadership model. And the Authentic Lifestyle guide to a whole-life kind of success in and out of your office is on the way, too!

My goal is to have the certainties and the rewards of authenticity touch all aspects of your life. That, my friend, is the key to real and meaningful and successful relationships. It's an altogether better way to do what you do.

# WHAT'S IN & WHAT'S OUT

## IN

Left Brain & Right Brain



Idea Sharing

Industry Experts

Team Players

Authentic Partners

Long-term Based

Relationship Capital

Niche Masters / Specialists

Right Now!

Conversations Collaboration

Blogs

Top 100 Relationships

Amicable

Us

Experts & Thought Leaders

## OUT

Right Brain



Favors

Me

Aggressive

Brochures

Presentations

Educating

Products Specialists

Advertising

Sales Funnel

Lone Rangers

Generalist

Closers

Buyer – Seller

Transaction Based



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